This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

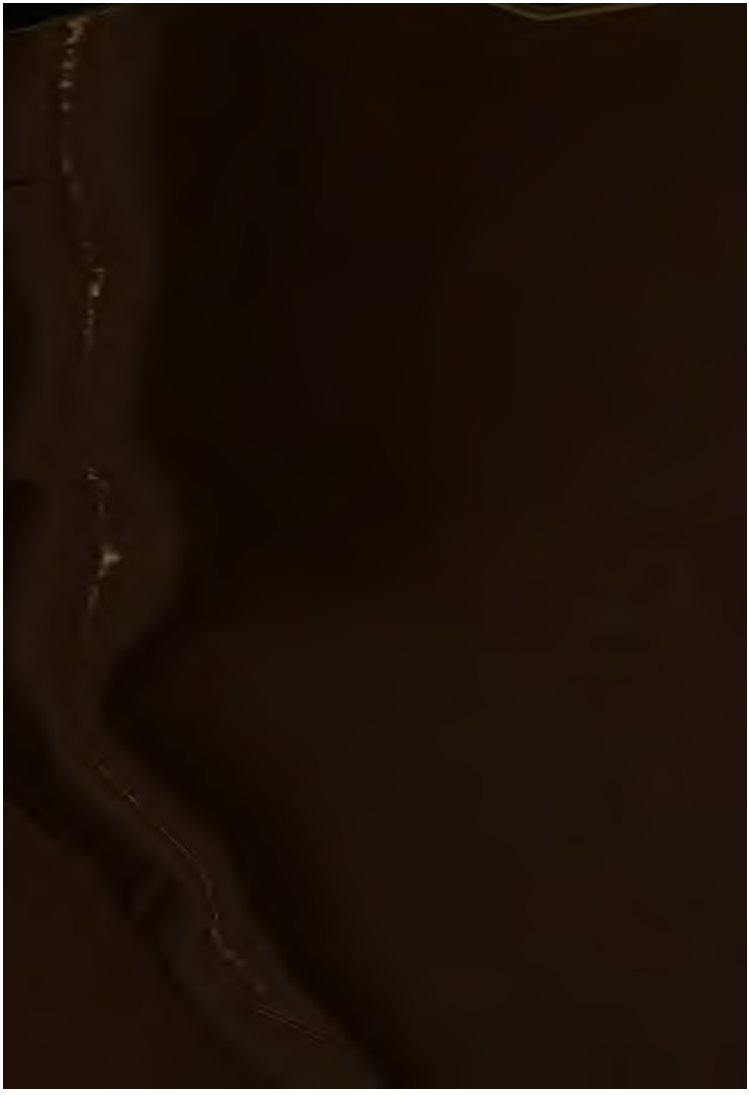
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07574241 5



With kind wishes
for many years
of birthdays.
M. A. P.
March 22, 1887

POEMS.

POEMS

BY

CELIA THAXTER

ELEVENTH EDITION

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1883.

A NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
13392B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1930 L

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by
L. L. THAXTER,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY
H. O. HOUGHTON AND COMPANY.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
LAND-LOCKED	9
OFF SHORE	11
EXPECTATION	13
THE WRECK OF THE POCAHONTAS	16
A THANKSGIVING	22
THE MINUTE-GUNS	25
SEAWARD	27
ROCK WEEDS	29
THE SANDPIPER	32
TWILIGHT	34
THE SWALLOW	36
A GRATEFUL HEART	39
THE SPANIARDS' GRAVES	41
WATCHING	43
IN MAY	46
A SUMMER DAY	48
REGRET	52
BEFORE SUNRISE	54
BY THE ROADSIDE	58
SORROW	61
NOVEMBER	63

WQR 19 FEB 30

PAGE

COURAGE 64
REMEMBRANCE 66
SONG 67
A TRYST 69
IMPRISONED 74
PRESAGE 76
MIDSUMMER MIDNIGHT 78
APRIL DAYS 81
HEARTBREAK HILL 83
THE SONG-SPARROW 87
IN KITTERY CHURCHYARD 89
AT THE BREAKERS' EDGE 92
"FOR THOUGHTS" 95
WHEREFORE? 97
GUENDOLEN 100
THE WATCH OF BOON ISLAND 102
BEETHOVEN 106
MOZART 108
SCHUBERT 109
CHOPIN 111
THE PIMPERNEL 113
BY THE DEAD 117
FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND 119
A BROKEN LILY 124
MAY MORNING 125
ALL 'S WELL 127

PAGE

THE SECRET 132
SEASIDE GOLDEN-ROD 135
MARCH 137
SONG* 139
THE WHITE ROVER 140

POEMS FOR CHILDREN.

INHOSPITALITY 147
THE GREAT WHITE OWL 150
YELLOW-BIRD 154
SPRING 156
THE BURGOMASTER GULL 158
MILKING 162
JACK FROST 165
THE BIRDS' ORCHESTRA 168
THE BLIND LAMB 170
THE ROBIN 175
MOZART AT THE FIRESIDE 177
UNDER THE LIGHT-HOUSE 180
THE CRADLE 184
CHANTICLEER 187

* By Oscar Laighton.

POEMS.

LAND-LOCKED.

BLACK lie the hills, swiftly doth daylight flee,
And catching gleams of sunset's dying smile,
Through the dusk land for many a changing mile
The river runneth softly to the sea.

O happy river, could I follow thee!
O yearning heart, that never can be still!
O wistful eyes, that watch the steadfast hill,
Longing for level line of solemn sea,

Have patience, — here are flowers and songs of birds,
Beauty and fragrance, wealth of sound and sight,
All summer's glory thine from morn till night,
And life too full of joy for uttered words.

Neither am I ungrateful: — but I dream
  Deliciously, how twilight falls to-night
  Over the glimmering water, how the light
Dies blissfully away, until I seem

To feel the wind sea-scented on my cheek,
  To catch the sound of dusky flapping sail
  And dip of oars, and voices on the gale
Afar off, calling low; — my name they speak!

O Earth! thy summer song of joy may soar
  Ringing to heaven in triumph. I but crave
  The sad, caressing murmur of the wave
That breaks in tender music on the shore.

OFF SHORE.

Rock, little boat, beneath the quiet sky,
Only the stars behold us where we lie, —
Only the stars and yonder brightening moon

On the wide sea to-night alone are we;
The sweet, bright summer day dies silently,
Its glowing sunset will have faded soon.

Rock softly, little boat, the while I mark
The far off gliding sails, distinct and dark,
Across the west pass steadily and slow.

But on the eastern waters sad, they change
And vanish, dream-like, gray, and cold, and strange
And no one knoweth whither they may go.

We care not, we, drifting with wind and tide,
While glad waves darken upon either side,
Save where the moon sends silver sparkles down.

And yonder slender stream of changing light,
Now white, now crimson, tremulously bright,
Where dark the light-house stands, with fiery crown.

Thick falls the dew, soundless on sea and shore:
It shines on little boat and idle oar,
Wherever moonbeams touch with tranquil glow.

The waves are full of whispers wild and sweet;
They call to me, — incessantly they beat
Along the boat from stern to curvéd prow.

Comes the careering wind, blows back my hair,
All damp with dew, to kiss me unaware,
Murmuring "Thee I love," and passes on.

Sweet sounds on rocky shores the distant rote;
O could we float forever, little boat,
Under the blissful sky drifting alone!

EXPECTATION.

THROUGHOUT the lonely house the whole day long
The wind-harp's fitful music sinks and swells,—
A cry of pain, sometimes, or sad and strong,
Or faint, like broken peals of silver bells.

Across the little garden comes the breeze,
Bows all its cups of flame, and brings to me
Its breath of mignonette and bright sweet peas,
With drowsy murmurs from the encircling sea.

In at the open door a crimson drift
Of fluttering, fading woodbine leaves is blown,
And through the clambering vine the sunbeams sift,
And trembling shadows on the floor are thrown.

I climb the stair, and from the window lean
Seeking thy sail, O love, that still delays;
Longing to catch its glimmer, searching keen
The jealous distance veiled in tender haze.

What care I if the pansies purple be,
Or sweet the wind-harp wails through the slow hours;
Or that the lulling music of the sea
Comes woven with the perfume of the flowers?

Thou comest not! I ponder o'er the leaves,
The crimson drift behind the open door:
Soon shall we listen to a wind that grieves,
Mourning this glad year, dead forevermore.

And, O my love, shall we on some sad day
Find joys and hopes low fallen like the leaves,
Blown by life's chilly autumn wind away
In withered heaps God's eye alone perceives?

Come thou, and save me from my dreary thought!
Who dares to question Time, what it may bring?
Yet round us lies the radiant summer, fraught
With beauty: must we dream of suffering?

Yea, even so. Through this enchanted land,
This morning-red of life, we go to meet
The tempest in the desert, hand in hand,
Along God's paths of pain, that seek His feet.

But this one golden moment, — hold it fast!
The light grows long: low in the west the sun,
Clear red and glorious, slowly sinks at last,
And while I muse, the tranquil day is done.

The land breeze freshens in thy gleaming sail!
Across the singing waves the shadows creep:
Under the new moon's thread of silver pale,
With the first star, thou comest o'er the deep

THE WRECK OF THE POCAHONTAS.

I LIT the lamps in the light-house tower,
For the sun dropped down and the day was dead
They shone like a glorious clustered flower, —
Ten golden and five red.

Looking across, where the line of coast
Stretched darkly, shrinking away from the sea,
The lights sprang out at its edge, — almost
They seemed to answer me!

O warning lights! burn bright and clear,
Hither the storm comes! Leagues away
It moans and thunders low and drear, —
Burn till the break of day!

Good-night! I called to the gulls that sailed
Slow past me through the evening sky;
And my comrades, answering shrilly, hailed
Me back with boding cry.

A mournful breeze began to blow,
  Weird music it drew through the iron bars,
The sullen billows boiled below,
  And dimly peered the stars;

The sails that flecked the ocean floor
  From east to west leaned low and fled;
They knew what came in the distant roar
  That filled the air with dread!

Flung by a fitful gust, there beat
  Against the window a dash of rain: —
Steady as tramp of marching feet
  Strode on the hurricane.

It smote the waves for a moment still,
  Level and deadly white for fear;
The bare rock shuddered, — an awful thrill
  Shook even my tower of cheer.

Like all the demons loosed at last,
  Whistling and shrieking, wild and wide,
The mad wind raged, while strong and fast
  Rolled in the rising tide.

And soon in ponderous showers, the spray,
  Struck from the granite, reared and sprung
And clutched at tower and cottage gray,
  Where overwhelmed they clung

Half drowning to the naked rock;
  But still burned on the faithful light,
Nor faltered at the tempest's shock,
  Through all the fearful night.

Was it in vain? That knew not we.
  We seemed, in that confusion vast
Of rushing wind and roaring sea,
  One point whereon was cast

The whole Atlantic's weight of brine.
  Heaven help the ship should drift our way!
No matter how the light might shine
  Far on into the day.

When morning dawned, above the din
  Of gale and breaker boomed a gun!
Another! We who sat within
  Answered with cries each one.

Into each other's eyes with fear,
  We looked through helpless tears, as still,
One after one, near and more near,
  The signals pealed, until

The thick storm seemed to break apart
  To show us, staggering to her grave,
The fated brig. We had no heart
  To look, for naught could save.

One glimpse of black hull heaving slow,
  Then closed the mists o'er canvas torn
And tangled ropes swept to and fro
  From masts that raked forlorn.

Weeks after, yet ringed round with spray,
  Our island lay, and none might land;
Though blue the waters of the bay
  Stretched calm on either hand.

And when at last from the distant shore
  A little boat stole out, to reach
Our loneliness, and bring once more
  Fresh human thought and speech,

We told our tale, and the boatmen cried:
"'Twas the *Pocahontas*, — all were lost!
For miles along the coast the tide
Her shattered timbers tossed."

Then I looked the whole horizon round, —
So beautiful the ocean spread
About us, o'er those sailors drowned!
"Father in heaven," I said, —

A child's grief struggling in my breast, —
"Do purposeless thy children meet
Such bitter death? How was it best
These hearts should cease to beat?

O wherefore! Are we naught to Thee?
Like senseless weeds that rise and fall
Upon thine awful sea, are we
No more then, after all?"

And I shut the beauty from my sight,
For I thought of the dead that lay below;
From the bright air faded the warmth and light,
There came a chill like snow.

Then I heard the far-off rote resound,
  Where the breakers slow and slumberous rolled,
And a subtile sense of Thought profound
  Touched me with power untold.

And like a voice eternal spake
  That wondrous rhythm, and, "Peace, be still!"
It murmured, "bow thy head and take
  Life's rapture and life's ill,

And wait. At last all shall be clear."
  The long, low, mellow music rose
And fell, and soothed my dreaming ear
  With infinite repose.

Sighing I climbed the light-house stair,
  Half forgetting my grief and pain;
And while the day died, sweet and fair,
  I lit the lamps again.

A THANKSGIVING.

HIGH on the ledge the wind blows
the bay-berry bright,
Turning the leaves till they shudder
and shine in the light:
Yellow St. John's-wort and yarrow
are nodding their heads,
Iris and wild-rose are glowing
in purples and reds.

Swift flies the schooner careering
beyond o'er the blue;
Faint shows the furrow she leaves as
she cleaves lightly through;
Gay gleams the fluttering flag at
her delicate mast;
Full swell the sails with the wind
that is following fast.

Quail and sand-piper and swallow
and sparrow are here:
Sweet sound their manifold notes, high
and low, far and near;
Chorus of musical waters, the rush
of the breeze,
Steady and strong from the south, —
what glad voices are these!

O cup of the wild-rose, curved close to
hold odorous dew,
What thought do you hide in your
heart? I would that I knew!
O beautiful Iris, unfurling your
purple and gold,
What victory fling you abroad
in the flags you unfold?

Sweet may your thought be, red rose,
but still sweeter is mine,
Close in my heart hidden, clear as
your dewdrop divine.
Flutter your gonfalons, Iris, the
pæan I sing,
Is for victory better than joy or
than beauty can bring.

Into thy calm eyes, O Nature, I look
and rejoice;
Prayerful, I add my one note to
the Infinite voice:
As shining and singing and sparkling
glides on the glad day,
And eastward the swift-rolling planet
wheels into the gray.

THE MINUTE-GUNS.

I STOOD within the little cove,
  Full of the morning's life and hope,
While heavily the eager waves
  Charged thundering up the rocky slope.

The splendid breakers! How they rushed,
  All emerald green and flashing white,
Tumultuous in the morning sun,
  With cheer and sparkle and delight!

And freshly blew the fragrant wind,
  The wild sea wind, across their tops,
And caught the spray and flung it far
  In sweeping showers of glittering drops.

Within the cove all flashed and foamed
  With many a fleeting rainbow hue;
Without, gleamed bright against the sky,
  A tender wavering line of blue,

Where tossed the distant waves, and far
Shone silver-white a quiet sail;
And overhead the soaring gulls
With graceful pinions stemmed the gale.

And all my pulses thrilled with joy,
Watching the winds' and waters' strife,
With sudden rapture, — and I cried,
"O sweet is Life! Thank God for life!"

Sailed any cloud across the sky,
Marring this glory of the sun's?
Over the sea, from distant forts,
There came the boom of minute-guns!

War-tidings! Many a brave soul fled,
And many a heart the message stuns!
I saw no more the joyous waves,
I only heard the minute-guns.

SEAWARD.

To ———.

How long it seems since that mild April night,
  When, leaning from the window, you and I
Heard, clearly ringing from the shadowy bight,
  The loon's unearthly cry!

Southwest the wind blew, million little waves
  Ran rippling round the point in mellow tune,
But mournful, like the voice of one who raves,
  That laughter of the loon!

We called to him, while blindly through the haze
  Uprose the meagre moon behind us, slow,
So dim, the fleet of boats we scarce could trace,
  Moored lightly just below.

We called, and lo, he answered! Half in fear
  We sent the note back. Echoing rock and bay
Made melancholy music far and near,
  Sadly it died away.

That schooner, you remember? Flying ghost!
Her canvas catching every wandering beam,
Aerial, noiseless, past the glimmering coast
She glided like a dream.

Would we were leaning from your window now,
Together calling to the eerie loon,
The fresh wind blowing care from either brow,
This sumptuous night of June!

So many sighs load this sweet inland air,
'Tis hard to breathe, nor can we find relief, —
However lightly touched we all must share
This nobleness of grief.

But sighs are spent before they reach your ear;
Vaguely they mingle with the water's rune.
No sadder sound salutes you than the clear,
Wild laughter of the loon.

ROCK WEEDS.

So bleak these shores, wind-swept and all the year
  Washed by the wild Atlantic's restless tide,
You would not dream that flowers the woods hold dear
  Amid such desolation dare abide.

Yet when the bitter winter breaks, some day,
  With soft winds fluttering her garments hem,
Up from the sweet South comes the lingering May,
  Sets the first wind-flower trembling on its stem;

Scatters her violets with lavish hands,
  White, blue, and amber; calls the columbine,
Till like clear flame in lonely nooks, gay bands
  Swinging their scarlet bells, obey the sign;

Makes buttercups and dandelions blaze,
  And throws in glimmering patches here and there
The little eyebright's pearls, and gently lays
  The impress of her beauty everywhere.

Later, June bids the sweet wild rose to blow,
  Wakes from its dream the drowsy pimpernel;
Unfolds the bindweed's ivory buds that glow
  As delicately blushing as a shell.

Then purple Iris smiles, and hour by hour,
  The fair procession multiplies; and soon,
In clusters creamy white, the elder-flower
  Waves its broad disk against the rising moon.

O'er quiet beaches shelving to the sea
  Tall mulleins sway, and thistles; all day long
Flows in the wooing water dreamily,
  With subtile music in its slumberous song.

Herb-robert hears, and princess'-feather bright,
  And gold-thread clasps the little skull-cap blue;
And troops of swallows, gathering for their flight,
  O'er golden-rod and asters hold review.

The barren island dreams in flowers, while blow
  The south winds, drawing haze o'er sea and land;
Yet the great heart of ocean, throbbing slow,
  Makes the frail blossoms vibrate where they stand;

And hints of heavier pulses soon to shake
  Its mighty breast when summer is no more,
And devastating waves sweep on and break,
  And clasp with girdle white the iron shore.

Close folded, safe within the sheltering seed,
  Blossom and bell and leafy beauty hide;
Nor icy blast, nor bitter spray they heed,
  But patiently their wondrous change abide.

The heart of God through his creation stirs,
  We thrill to feel it, trembling as the flowers
That die to live again, — his messengers,
  To keep faith firm in these sad souls of ours.

The waves of Time may devastate our lives,
  The frosts of age may check our failing breath,
They shall not touch the spirit that survives
  Triumphant over doubt and pain and death.

THE SANDPIPER.

ACROSS the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit, —
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white light-houses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach, —
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry.

He starts not at my fitful song,
  Or flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
  He scans me with a fearless eye.
Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,
  The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
  When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
  To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
  The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
  Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

TWILIGHT.

SEPTEMBER'S slender crescent grows again
  Distinct in yonder peaceful evening red,
  Clearer the stars are sparkling overhead,
And all the sky is pure, without a stain.

Cool blows the evening wind from out the West
  And bows the flowers, the last sweet flowers that
    bloom,
  Pale asters, many a heavy-waving plume
Of golden-rod that bends as if opprest.

The summer's songs are hushed. Up the lone shore
  The weary waves wash sadly, and a grief
  Sounds in the wind, like farewells fond and brief:
(The cricket's chirp but makes the silence more.)

Life's autumn comes; the leaves begin to fall;
  The moods of spring and summer pass away;
  The glory and the rapture, day by day,
Depart, and soon the quiet grave folds all.

O thoughtful sky, how many eyes in vain
Are lifted to your beauty, full of tears!
How many hearts go back through all the years,
Heavy with loss, eager with questioning pain,

To read the dim Hereafter, to obtain
One glimpse beyond the earthly curtain, where
Their dearest dwell, where they may be or e'er
September's slender crescent shines again!

THE SWALLOW.

THE swallow twitters about the eaves;
Blithely she sings, and sweet and clear;
Around her climb the woodbine leaves
In a golden atmosphere.

The summer wind sways leaf and spray,
That catch and cling to the cool gray wall;
The bright sea stretches miles away,
And the noon sun shines o'er all.

In the chamber's shadow, quietly,
I stand and worship the sky and the leaves,
The golden air and the brilliant sea,
The swallow at the eaves.

Like a living jewel she sits and sings;
Fain would I read her riddle aright,
Fain would I know whence her rapture springs,
So strong in a thing so slight!

The fine, clear fire of joy that steals
  Through all my spirit at what I see
In the glimpse my window's space reveals,—
  That seems no mystery!

But scarce for her joy can she utter her song;
  Yet she knows not the beauty of skies or seas.
Is it bliss of living, so sweet and strong?
  Is it love, which is more than these?

O happy creature! what stirs thee so?
  A spark of the gladness of God thou art.
Why should we seek to find and to know
  The secret of thy heart?

Before the gates of his mystery
  Trembling we knock with an eager hand;
Silent behind them waiteth He;
  Not yet may we understand.

But thrilling throughout the universe
  Throbs the pulse of his mighty will,
Till we gain the knowledge of joy or curse
  In the choice of good or ill.

He looks from the eyes of the little child.
And searches souls with their gaze so clear;
To the heart some agony makes wild
He whispers, "I am here."

He smiles in the face of every flower;
In the swallow's twitter of sweet content
He speaks, and we follow through every hour
The way his deep thought went.

Here should be courage and hope and faith;
Nought has escaped the trace of his hand;
And a voice in the heart of his silence saith,
One day we shall understand.

A GRATEFUL HEART.

LAST night I stole away alone, to find
A mellow crescent setting o'er the sea,
And lingered in its light, while over me
Blew fitfully the grieving autumn wind.

And somewhat sadly to myself I said,
"Summer is gone," and watched how bright and fast
Through the moon's track the little waves sped past,—
"Summer is gone! her golden days are dead."

Regretfully I thought, "Since I have trod
Earth's ways with willing or reluctant feet,
Never did season bring me days more sweet,
Crowned with rare joys and priceless gifts from God.

"And they are gone: they will return no more."
The slender moon went down, all red and still:
The stars shone clear, the silent dews fell chill;
The waves with ceaseless murmur washed the shore.

A low voice spake: "And wherefore art thou sad?
Here in thy heart all summer folded lies,
And smiles in sunshine though the sweet time dies:
'Tis thine to keep forever fresh and glad!"

Yea, gentle voice, though the fair days depart,
And skies grow cold above the restless sea,
God's gifts are measureless, and there shall be
Eternal summer in the grateful heart.

THE SPANIARDS' GRAVES

AT THE ISLES OF SHOALS.

O SAILORS, did sweet eyes look after you
  The day you sailed away from sunny Spain?
Bright eyes that followed fading ship and crew,
  Melting in tender rain?

Did no one dream of that drear night to be,
  Wild with the wind, fierce with the stinging snow,
When on yon granite point that frets the sea,
  The ship met her death-blow?

Fifty long years ago these sailors died:
  (None know how many sleep beneath the waves:)
Fourteen gray head-stones, rising side by side,
  Point out their nameless graves, —

Lonely, unknown, deserted, but for me,
  And the wild birds that flit with mournful cry,
And sadder winds, and voices of the sea
  That moans perpetually.

Wives, mothers, maidens, wistfully, in vain
Questioned the distance for the yearning sail,
That, leaning landward, should have stretched again
White arms wide on the gale,

To bring back their beloved. Year by year,
Weary they watched, till youth and beauty passed,
And lustrous eyes grew dim and age drew near,
And hope was dead at last.

Still summer broods o'er that delicious land,
Rich, fragrant, warm with skies of golden glow:
Live any yet of that forsaken band
Who loved so long ago?

O Spanish women, over the far seas,
Could I but show you where your dead repose.
Could I send tidings on this northern breeze
That strong and steady blows!

Dear dark-eyed sisters, you remember yet
These you have lost, but you can never know
One stands at their bleak graves whose eyes are wet
With thinking of your woe!

WATCHING.

In childhood's season fair,
On many a balmy, moonless summer night,
While wheeled the light-house arms of dark and bright
Far through the humid air;

How patient have I been,
Sitting alone, a happy little maid,
Waiting to see, careless and unafraid,
My father's boat come in;

Close to the water's edge
Holding a tiny spark, that he might steer
(So dangerous the landing, far and near,)
Safe past the ragged ledge.

I had no fears, — not one;
The wild wide waste of water leagues around
Washed ceaselessly; there was no human sound,
And I was all alone.

But Nature was so kind!
Like a dear friend I loved the loneliness;
My heart rose glad as at some sweet caress
When passed the wandering wind.

Yet it was joy to hear
From out the darkness, sounds grow clear at last,
Of rattling rowlock, and of creaking mast,
And voices drawing near!

"Is't thou, dear father? Say!"
What well known shout resounded in reply,
As loomed the tall sail, smitten suddenly
With the great light-house ray!

I will be patient now,
Dear Heavenly Father, waiting here for thee:
I know the darkness holds thee. Shall I be
Afraid, when it is Thou?

On thy eternal shore,
In pauses, when life's tide is at its prime,
I hear the everlasting rote of Time
Beating for evermore.

Shall I not then rejoice?
O never lost or sad should child of thine
Sit waiting, fearing lest there come no sign,
No whisper of thy voice!

IN MAY.

THAT was a curlew calling overhead,
  That fine, clear whistle shaken from the clouds:
See! hovering o'er the swamp with wings outspread
  He sinks where at its edge in shining crowds
The yellow violets dance as they unfold,
In the blithe spring wind, all their green and gold.

Blithe South-wind, spreading bloom upon the sea,
  Drawing about the world this band of haze
So softly delicate, and bringing me
  A touch of balm that like a blessing stays;
Though beauty like a dream bathes sea and land,
For the first time Death holds me by the hand.

Yet none the less the swallows weave above
  Through the bright air a web of light and song,
And calling clear and sweet from cove to cove,
  The sandpiper, the lonely rocks among,
Makes wistful music, and the singing sea
Sends its strong chorus upward solemnly.

O Mother Nature, infinitely dear!
Vainly I search the beauty of thy face,
Vainly thy myriad voices charm my ear,
I cannot gather from thee any trace
Of God's intent. Help me to understand
Why, this sweet morn, Death holds me by the hand.

I watch the waves, shoulder to shoulder set,
That strive and vanish and are seen no more.
The earth is sown with graves that we forget,
And races of mankind the wide world o'er
Rise, strive, and vanish, leaving nought behind,
Like changing waves swept by the changing wind.

"Hard-hearted, cold, and blind," she answers me,
"Vexing thy soul with riddles hard to guess!
No waste of any atom canst thou see,
Nor make I any gesture purposeless.
Lift thy dim eyes up to the conscious sky!
God *meant* that rapture in the curlew's cry.

"He holds his whirling worlds in check; not one
May from its awful orbit swerve aside;
Yet breathes He in this south wind, bids the sun
Wake the fair flowers He fashioned, far and wide,
And this strong pain thou canst not understand
Is but his grasp on thy reluctant hand."

A SUMMER DAY.

At day-break in the fresh light, joyfully
The fishermen drew in their laden net;
The shore shone rosy purple and the sea
Was streaked with violet;

And pink with sunrise, many a shadowy sail
Lay southward, lighting up the sleeping bay;
And in the west the white moon, still and pale,
Faded before the day.

Silence was everywhere. The rising tide
Slowly filled every cove and inlet small;
A musical low whisper, multiplied,
You heard, and that was all.

No clouds at dawn, but as the sun climbed higher,
White columns, thunderous, splendid, up the sky
Floated and stood, heaped in his steady fire,
A stately company.

Stealing along the coast from cape to cape
The weird mirage crept tremulously on,
In many a magic change and wondrous shape,
Throbbing beneath the sun.

At noon the wind rose, swept the glassy sea
To sudden ripple, thrust against the clouds
A strenuous shoulder, gathering steadily
Drove them before in crowds;

Till all the west was dark, and inky black
The level-ruffled water underneath,
And up the wind cloud tossed, — a ghostly rack,
In many a ragged wreath.

Then sudden roared the thunder, a great peal
Magnificent, that broke and rolled away;
And down the wind plunged, like a furious keel,
Cleaving the sea to spray;

And brought the rain sweeping o'er land and sea.
And then was tumult! Lightning sharp and keen,
Thunder, wind, rain, — a mighty jubilee
The heaven and earth between!

Loud the roused ocean sang, a chorus grand;
A solemn music rolled in undertone
Of waves that broke about on either hand
The little island lone;

Where, joyful in His tempest as His calm,
Held in the hollow of that hand of His,
I joined with heart and soul in God's great psalm,
Thrilled with a nameless bliss.

Soon lulled the wind, the summer storm soon died;
The shattered clouds went eastward, drifting slow,
From the low sun the rain-fringe swept aside,
Bright in his rosy glow,

And wide a splendor streamed through all the sky;
O'er sea and land one soft, delicious blush,
That touched the gray rocks lightly, tenderly;
A transitory flush.

Warm, odorous gusts blew off the distant land,
With spice of pine-woods, breath of hay new-mown
O'er miles of waves and sea scents cool and bland,
Full in our faces blown.

Slow faded the sweet light, and peacefully
The quiet stars came out, one after one:
The holy twilight fell upon the sea,
The summer day was done.

Such unalloyed delight its hours had given,
Musing, this thought rose in my grateful mind,
That God, who watches all things, up in heaven,
With patient eyes and kind,

Saw and was pleased, perhaps, one child of his
Dared to be happy like the little birds,
Because He gave his children days like this
Rejoicing beyond words;

Dared, lifting up to Him untroubled eyes
In gratitude that worship is, and prayer,
Sing and be glad with ever new surprise,
He made his world so fair!

REGRET.

Softly Death touched her, and she passed away
Out of this glad, bright world she made more fair,
Sweet as the apple-blossoms, when in May
The orchards flush, of summer grown aware.

All that fresh, delicate beauty gone from sight,
That gentle, gracious presence felt no more!
How must the house be emptied of delight,
What shadows on the threshold she passed o'er!

She loved me. Surely I was grateful, yet
I could not give her back all she gave me.
Ever I think of it with vague regret,
Musing upon a summer by the sea:

Remembering troops of merry girls who pressed
About me — clinging arms and tender eyes,
And love, like scent of roses. With the rest
She came, to fill my heart with new surprise.

The day I left them all, and sailed away,
While o'er the calm sea, 'neath the soft gray sky
They waved farewell, she followed me, to say
Yet once again her wistful, sweet "good-bye."

At the boat's bow she drooped; her light-green dress
Swept o'er the skiff in many a graceful fold,
Her glowing face, bright with a mute caress,
Crowned with her lovely hair of shadowy gold:

And tears she dropped into the crystal brine
For me, unworthy — as we slowly swung
Free of the mooring. Her last look was mine,
Seeking me still the motley crowd among.

O tender memory of the dead I hold
So precious through the fret and change of years!
Were I to live till Time itself grew old,
The sad sea would be sadder for those tears.

BEFORE SUNRISE.

THIS grassy gorge, as daylight failed last night,
I traversed toward the west, where, thin and young,
Bent like Diana's bow and silver bright,
Half lost in rosy haze, a crescent hung.

I paused upon the beach's upper edge:
The violet east all shadowy lay behind;
Southward the light-house glittered o'er the ledge,
And lightly, softly blew the western wind.

And at my feet, between the turf and stone,
Wild roses, bayberry, purple thistles tall,
And pink herb-robert grew, where shells were strown,
And morning-glory vines climbed over all.

I stooped the closely folded buds to note,
That gleamed in the dim light mysteriously,
While full of whispers of the far off rote,
Summer's enchanted dusk crept o'er the sea.

And sights and sounds and sea-scents delicate,
So wrought upon my soul with sense of bliss,
Happy I sat as if at heaven's gate,
Asking on earth no greater joy than this.

And now, at dawn, upon the beach again,
Kneeling I wait the coming of the sun,
Watching the looser-folded buds, and fain
To see the marvel of their day begun.

All the world lies so dewy-fresh and still!
Whispers so gently all the water wide,
Hardly it breaks the silence: from the hill
Come clear bird-voices mingling with the tide.

Sunset or dawn: which is the lovelier? Lo!
My darlings, sung to all the balmy night
By summer waves and softest winds that blow,
Begin to feel the thrilling of the light!

Red lips of roses waiting to be kissed
By early sunshine, soon in smiles will break.
But O, ye morning-glories, that keep tryst
With the first ray of day-break, ye awake!

O bells of triumph, ringing noiseless peals
  Of unimagined music to the day!
Almost I could believe each blossom feels
  The same delight that sweeps my soul away.

O bells of triumph! delicate trumpets, thrown
  Heavenward and earthward, turned east, west, north, south,
In lavish beauty, who through you has blown
  This sweet cheer of the morning with calm mouth?

'Tis God who breathes the triumph; He who wrought
  The tender curves, and laid the tints divine
Along the lovely lines; the Eternal Thought
  That troubles all our lives with wise design.

Yea, out of pain and death his beauty springs,
  And out of doubt a deathless confidence:
Though we are shod with leaden cares, our wings
  Shall lift us yet out of our deep suspense!

Thou great Creator! Pardon us who reach
  For other heaven beyond this world of thine,

This matchless world, where thy least touch doth teach
Thy solemn lessons clearly, line on line.

And help us to be grateful, we who live
Such sordid, fretful lives of discontent,
Nor see the sunshine nor the flower, nor strive
To find the love thy bitter chastening meant.

BY THE ROADSIDE.

DROPPED the warm rain from the brooding sky
  Softly all the summer afternoon;
Up the road I loitered carelessly,
  Glad to be alive in blissful June.

Though so gray the sky, and though the mist
  Swept the hills and half their beauty hid;
Though the scattering drops the broad leaves
    kissed,
  And no ray betwixt the vapor slid,

Yet the daisies tossed their white and gold
  In the quiet fields on either side,
And the green gloom deepened in the old
  Walnut trees that flung their branches wide;

And the placid river wound away
  Westward to the hills through meadows fair,
Flower-fringed and starred, while blithe and gay
  Called the blackbirds through the balmy air.

Right and left I scanned the landscape round,
Every shape, and scent, and wild bird's call,
Every color, curve, and gentle sound,
Deep into my heart I gathered all.

Up I looked, and down upon the sod
Sprinkled thick with violets blue and bright,
"Surely, 'Through his garden walketh God,'"
Low I whispered, full of my delight.

Like a vision, on the path before,
Came a little rosy, sun-browned maid,
Straying toward me from her cottage door,
Paused, up-looking shyly, half afraid.

Never word she spake, but gazing so,
Slow a smile rose to her clear brown eyes,
Overflowed her face with such a glow
That I thrilled with sudden, sweet surprise.

Here was sunshine 'neath the cloudy skies!
Low I knelt to bring her face to mine:
Sweeter, brighter grew her shining eyes,
Yet she gave me neither word nor sign.

But within her look a blessing beamed:
Meek I grew before it: was it just?
Was I worthy this pure light that streamed?
Such approval, and such love and trust!

Half the flowers I carried in my hands,
Lightly in her pretty arms I laid:
Silent, but as one who understands,
Clasped them close the rosy little maid.

Fair behind the honeysuckle spray
Shone her innocent, delightful face!
Then I rose and slowly went my way,
Left her standing, lighting all the place.

While her golden look stole after me,
Lovelier bloomed the violets where I trod:
More divine earth's beauty seemed to be,
"Through his garden visibly walked God."

SORROW.

UPON my lips she laid her touch divine,
And merry speech and careless laughter died;
She fixed her melancholy eyes on mine,
And would not be denied.

I saw the west-wind loose his cloudlets white
In flocks, careering through the April sky,
I could not sing though joy was at its height,
For she stood silent by.

I watched the lovely evening fade away;
A mist was lightly drawn across the stars;
She broke my quiet dream, I heard her say,
"Behold your prison bars!

"Earth's gladness shall not satisfy your soul,
This beauty of the world in which you live,
The crowning grace that sanctifies the whole,
That, I alone can give."

I heard and shrank away from her afraid ,
But still she held me and would still abide ;
Youth's bounding pulses slackened and obeyed,
With slowly ebbing tide.

" Look thou beyond the evening star," she said,
" Beyond the changing splendors of the day ;
Accept the pain, the weariness, the dread,
Accept and bid me stay ! "

I turned and clasped her close with sudden strengt
And slowly, sweetly, I became aware
Within my arms God's angel stood at length,
White-robed and calm and fair.

And now I look beyond the evening star,
Beyond the changing splendors of the day,
Knowing the pain He sends more precious far,
More beautiful, than they.

NOVEMBER.

THERE is no wind at all to-night
To dash the drops against the pane;
No sound abroad, nor any light,
And sadly falls the autumn rain;

There is no color in the world,
No lovely tint on hill or plain;
The summer's golden sails are furled,
And sadly falls the autumn rain.

The Earth lies tacitly beneath,
As it were dead to joy or pain:
It does not move, it does not breathe, —
And sadly falls the autumn rain.

And all my heart is patient too,
I wait till it shall wake again;
The songs of spring shall sound anew,
Though sadly falls the autumn rain.

COURAGE.

Because I hold it sinful to despond,
And will not let the bitterness of life
Blind me with burning tears, but look beyond
Its tumult and its strife;

Because I lift my head above the mist,
Where the sun shines and the broad breezes blow
By every ray and every rain-drop kissed
That God's love doth bestow;

Think you I find no bitterness at all?
No burden to be borne, like Christian's pack?
Think you there are no ready tears to fall
Because I keep them back?

Why should I hug life's ills with cold reserve,
To curse myself and all who love me? Nay!
A thousand times more good than I deserve
God gives me every day.

And in each one of these rebellious tears
Kept bravely back, He makes a rainbow shine;
Grateful I take his slightest gift, no fears
Nor any doubts are mine.

Dark skies must clear, and when the clouds are past,
One golden day redeems a weary year;
Patient I listen, sure that sweet at last
Will sound his voice of cheer.

Then vex me not with chiding. Let me be.
I must be glad and grateful to the end.
I grudge you not your cold and darkness, — **me**
The powers of light befriend.

REMEMBRANCE.

FRAGRANT and soft the summer wind doth blow.
  Weary I lie, with heavy, half-shut eyes,
  And watch, while wistful thoughts within me rise,
The curtain idly swaying to and fro.

There comes a sound of household toil from far,
  A woven murmur; voices shrill and sweet,
  Clapping of doors, and restless moving feet,
And tokens faint of fret, and noise, and jar.

Without, the broad Earth shimmers in the glare,
  Through the clear noon high rides the blazing sun,
  The birds are hushed; the cricket's chirp alone
With tremulous music cleaves the drowsy air.

I think, — "Past the gray rocks the wavelets run;
  The gold-brown sea-weed drapes the ragged ledge
  And brooding, silent, at the water's edge
The white gull sitteth, shining in the sun."

SONG.

We sail toward evening's lonely star
That trembles in the tender blue;
One single cloud, a dusky bar,
Burnt with dull carmine through and through,
Slow smouldering in the summer sky,
Lies low along the fading west.
How sweet to watch its splendors die,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed!

The soft breeze freshens, leaps the spray
To kiss our cheeks, with sudden cheer;
Upon the dark edge of the bay
Light-houses kindle, far and near,
And through the warm deeps of the sky
Steal faint star-clusters, while we rest
In deep refreshment, thou and I,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed.

How like a dream are earth and heaven,
Star-beam and darkness, sky and sea;
Thy face, pale in the shadowy even,
Thy quiet eyes that gaze on me!

O realize the moment's charm,
Thou dearest! we are at life's best,
Folded in God's encircling arm,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed.

A TRYST.

FROM out the desolation of the North
An iceberg took its way,
From its detaining comrades breaking forth,
And travelling night and day.

At whose command? Who bade it sail the deep
With that resistless force?
Who made the dread appointment it must keep?
Who traced its awful course?

To the warm airs that stir in the sweet South,
A good ship spread her sails;
Stately she passed beyond the harbor's mouth
Chased by the favoring gales;

And on her ample decks a happy crowd
Bade the fair land good-by;
Clear shone the day, with not a single cloud
In all the peaceful sky.

Brave men, sweet women, little children bright,
For all these she made room,
And with her freight of beauty and delight
She went to meet her doom.

Storms buffeted the iceberg, spray was swept
Across its loftiest height;
Guided alike by storm and calm, it kept
Its fatal path aright.

Then warmer waves gnawed at its crumbling base,
As if in piteous plea;
The ardent sun sent slow tears down its face,
Soft flowing to the sea.

Dawn kissed it with her tender rose tints, Eve
Bathed it in violet,
The wistful color o'er it seemed to grieve
With a divine regret.

Whether Day clad its clefts in rainbows dim
And shadowy as a dream,
Or Night through lonely spaces saw it swim
White in the moonlight's gleam,

Ever Death rode upon its solemn heights,
  Ever his watch he kept;
Cold at its heart through changing days and nights
  Its changeless purpose slept.

And where afar a smiling coast it passed,
  Straightway the air grew chill;
Dwellers thereon perceived a bitter blast,
  A vague report of ill.

Like some imperial creature, moving slow,
  Meanwhile, with matchless grace,
The stately ship, unconscious of her foe,
  Drew near the trysting place.

For still the prosperous breezes followed her,
  And half the voyage was o'er,
In many a breast glad thoughts began to stir
  Of lands that lay before.

And human hearts with longing love were dumb,
  That soon should cease to beat,
Thrilled with the hope of meetings soon to come,
  And lost in memories sweet.

Was not the weltering waste of water wide
  Enough for both to sail?
What drew the two together o'er the tide,
  Fair ship and iceberg pale?

There came a night with neither moon nor star,
  Clouds draped the sky in black;
With fluttering canvas reefed at every spar,
  And weird fire in her track,

The ship swept on; a wild wind gathering fast
  Drove her at utmost speed.
Bravely she bent before the fitful blast
  That shook her like a reed.

O helmsman, turn thy wheel! Will no surmise
  Cleave through the midnight drear?
No warning of the horrible surprise
  Reach thine unconscious ear?

She rushed upon her ruin. Not a flash
  Broke up the waiting dark;
Dully through wind and sea one awful crash
  Sounded, with none to mark.

Scarcely her crew had time to clutch despair,
So swift the work was done:
Ere their pale lips could frame a speechless prayer,
They perished, every one!

IMPRISONED.

LIGHTLY she lifts the large, pure, luminous shell,
Poises it in her strong and shapely hand.
"Listen," she says, "it has a tale to tell,
Spoken in language you may understand."

Smiling, she holds it at my dreaming ear:
The old, delicious murmur of the sea
Steals like enchantment through me, and I hear
Voices like echoes of eternity.

She stirs it softly. Lo, another speech!
In one of its dim chambers, shut from sight,
Is sealed the water that has kissed the beach
Where the far Indian Ocean leaps in light.

Those laughing ripples, hidden evermore
In utter darkness, plaintively repeat
Their lapsing on the glowing tropic shore,
In melancholy whispers low and sweet.

O prisoned wave that may not see the sun!
O voice that never may be comforted!
You cannot break the web that Fate has spun;
Out of your world are light and gladness fled.

The red dawn nevermore shall tremble far
Across the leagues of radiant brine to you;
You shall not sing to greet the evening star,
Nor dance exulting under heaven's clear blue.

Inexorably woven is the weft
That shrouds from you all joy but memory:
Only this tender, low lament is left
Of all the sumptuous splendor of the sea.

PRESAGE.

If, some day, I should seek those eyes
  So gentle now, — and find the strange,
  Pale shadow of a coming change,
To chill me with sad surprise;

Shouldst thou recall what thou hast given,
  And turn me slowly cold and dumb,
  And thou thyself again become
Remote as any star in heaven;

Would the sky ever seem again
  Perfectly clear? Would the serene,
  Sweet face of nature steal between
This grief and me, to dull its pain?

O not for many a weary day
  Would sorrow soften to regret,
  And many a sun would rise and set
Ere I, with cheerful heart, could say

"All undeserved it came. To-day
God takes it back again, because
Too beautiful a thing it was
For such as I to keep for aye."

And ever, through the coming years,
My star, remote in happy skies,
Would seem more heavenly fair through eyes
Yet tremulous with unfallen tears.

MIDSUMMER MIDNIGHT.

THE wide, still, moonlit water miles away,
Stretches in lonely splendor. Whispers creep
About us from the midnight wind, and play
Among the flowers that breathe so sweet in sleep;
A soft touch sways the milk-white, stately phlox,
And on its slender stem the poppy rocks.

Fair faces turn to watch the dusky sea,
And clear eyes brood upon the path of light
The white moon makes, the while deliciously,
Like some vague, tender memory of delight,
Or like some half remembered, dear regret,
Rises the odor of the mignonnette.

Midsummer glories, moonlight, flowers asleep,
And delicate perfume, mystic winds that blow
Soft-breathing, full of balm, and the great deep
In leagues of shadow swaying to and fro;
And loving human thought to mark it all,
And human hearts that to each other call;

Needs the enchantment of the summer night
  Another touch to make it perfect? Hark!
What sudden shaft of sound, like piercing light,
  Strikes on the ear athwart the moonlit dark?
Like some keen shock of joy is heard within
The wondrous music of the violin.

It is as if dumb Nature found a voice,
  And spoke with power, though in an unknown tongue.
What kinship has the music with the noise
  Of waves, or winds, or with the flowers, slow-swung
Like censers to and fro upon the air,
Or with the shadow, or the moonlight fair?

And yet it seems some subtile link exists,
  We know not how. And over every phase
Of thought and feeling wandering as it lists,
  Playing upon us as the west wind plays
Over the wind-harp, the subduing strain
Sweeps with resistless power of joy and pain.

Slow ebbs the golden tide and all is still.
  Ask the magician at whose touch awoke
That mighty, penetrating, prisoned will,
  The matchless voice that so divinely spoke,

Kindling to fresher life the listening soul,
What daring thought such fire from heaven stole?

He cannot tell us how the charm was wrought,
  Though in his hand he holds the potent key,
Nor read the spell that to the sweet night brought
  This crown of rapture and of mystery,
And lifted every heart, and drew away
All trace of worldliness that marred the day.

But every head is bowed. We watch the sea
  With other eyes, as if some hint of bliss
Spoke to us through the yearning melody,
  Of glad new worlds, of brighter lives than this;
While still the milk-white, stately phlox waves slow,
And drowsily the poppy rocks below.

APRIL DAYS.

O THE sweet, sweet lapsing of the tide,
Through the still hours of the golden afternoon!
O the warm, red sunshine, far and wide,
Falling soft as in the crowning days of June!

Calls the gray sandpiper from the quiet shore,
Weave the swallows light and music through the air,
Chants the sparrow all his pleasure o'er and o'er,
Sings and smiles the Spring, and sparkles everywhere.

Well I know that death and pain to all are near,
That, save sorrow, naught is certain this world gives;
Yet my heart stirs with the budding of the year,
And rejoices still with everything that lives.

Fold me then, O South-wind! God is good.
Gladly, gratefully I take thy sweet caress.
Call, sandpiper, from thy solitude,
Every sight and sound has power to bless.

O the sweet, sweet lapsing of the tide,
  Through the still hours of the golden afternoon!
Nor death, nor pain, nor sorrow shall abide,
  For God blesses all his children, late or soon.

HEARTBREAK HILL.

In Ipswich town, not far from the sea,
  Rises a hill which the people call
Heartbreak Hill, and its history
  Is an old, old legend, known to all.

The self-same dreary, worn-out tale
  Told by all peoples in every clime,
Still to be told till the ages fail,
  And there comes a pause in the march of Time.

It was a sailor who won the heart
  Of an Indian maiden, lithe and young;
And she saw him over the sea depart,
  While sweet in her ear his promise rung;

For he cried, as he kissed her wet eyes dry,
  "I'll come back, sweetheart; keep your faith!"
She said, "I will watch while the moons go by:"
  Her love was stronger than life or death.

So this poor dusk Ariadne kept
  Her watch from the hill-top rugged and steep;
Slowly the empty moments crept
  While she studied the changing face of the deep,

Fastening her eyes upon every speck
  That crossed the ocean within her ken;
Might not her lover be walking the deck,
  Surely and swiftly returning again?

The Isles of Shoals loomed, lonely and dim,
  In the northeast distance far and gray,
And on the horizon's uttermost rim
  The low rock heap of Boon Island lay.

And north and south and west and east
  Stretched sea and land in the blinding light,
Till evening fell, and her vigil ceased,
  And many a hearth-glow lit the night,

To mock those set and glittering eyes
  Fast growing wild as her hope went out.
Hateful seemed earth, and the hollow skies,
  Like her own heart, empty of aught but doubt

O, but the weary, merciless days,
  With the sun above, with the sea afar, —
No change in her fixed and wistful gaze
  From the morning-red to the evening star!

O, the winds that blew, and the birds that sang,
  The calms that smiled, and the storms that rolled,
The bells from the town beneath, that rang
  Through the summer's heat and the winter's cold!

The flash of the plunging surges white,
  The soaring gull's wild boding cry,
She was weary of all; there was no delight
  In heaven or earth, and she longed to die.

What was it to her though the Dawn should paint
  With delicate beauty skies and seas?
But the sweet, sad sunset splendors faint
  Made her soul sick with memories:

Drowning in sorrowful purple a sail
  In the distant east, where shadows grew,
Till the twilight shrouded it, cold and pale,
  And the tide of her anguish rose anew.

Like a slender statue carved of stone
She sat, with hardly motion or breath.
She wept no tears and she made no moan,
But her love was stronger than life or death.

He never came back! Yet faithful still,
She watched from the hill-top her life away.
And the townsfolk christened it Heartbreak Hill,
And it bears the name to this very day.

THE SONG-SPARROW.

In this sweet, tranquil afternoon of Spring,
While the low sun declines in the clear west,
I sit and hear the blithe song-sparrow sing
His strain of rapture not to be suppressed:
Pondering life's problem strange, while death draws near, —
I listen to his dauntless song of cheer.

His shadow flits across the quiet stone:
Like that brief transit is my space of days;
For, like a flower's faint perfume, youth is flown
Already, and there rests on all life's ways
A dimness; closer my beloved I clasp,
For all dear things seem slipping from my grasp.

Death touches all; the light of loving eyes
Goes out in darkness, comfort is withdrawn;
Lonely, and lonelier still the pathway lies,
Going toward the fading sunset from the dawn:
Yet hark! while those fine notes the silence break
As if all trouble were some grave mistake!

Thou little bird, how canst thou thus rejoice,
As if the world had known nor sin nor curse?
God never meant to mock us with that voice!
That is the key-note of the universe,
That song of perfect trust, of perfect cheer,
Courageous, constant, free of doubt or fear.

My little helper, ah, my comrade sweet,
My old companion in that far off time
When on life's threshold childhood's wingéd feet
Danced in the sunrise! Joy was at its prime
When all my heart responded to thy song,
Unconscious of earth's discords harsh and strong.

Now, grown aweary, sad with change and loss,
With the enigma of myself dismayed;
Poor, save in deep desire to bear the cross
God's hand on his defenseless creatures laid,
With patience, — here I sit this eve of spring,
And listen with bowed head, while thou dost sing.

And slowly all my soul with comfort fills,
And the old hope revives and courage grows;
Up the deserted shore a fresh tide thrills,
And like a dream the dark mood melts and goes,
And with thy joy again will I rejoice:
God never meant to mock us with that voice!

IN KITTERY CHURCHYARD.

"Mary, wife of Charles Chauncy, died April 23, 1758, in the 24th year of her age."

CRUSHING the scarlet strawberries in the grass,
I kneel to read the slanting stone. Alas!
How sharp a sorrow speaks! A hundred years
And more have vanished, with their smiles and tears,
Since here was laid, upon an April day,
Sweet Mary Chauncy in the grave away, —
A hundred years since here her lover stood
Beside her grave in such despairing mood,
And yet from out the vanished past I hear
His cry of anguish sounding deep and clear,
And all my heart with pity melts, as though
To-day's bright sun were looking on his woe.
'Of such a wife, O righteous Heaven! bereft,
What joy for me, what joy on earth is left?'
Still from my inmost soul the groans arise,
Still flow the sorrows ceaseless from mine eyes."
Alas, poor tortured soul! I look away

From the dark stone, — how brilliant shines the day!
A low wall, over which the roses shed
Their perfumed petals, shuts the quiet dead
Apart a little, and the tiny square
Stands in the broad and laughing field so fair,
And gay green vines climb o'er the rough stone-wall,
And all about the wild birds flit and call,
And but a stone's-throw southward, the blue sea
Rolls sparkling in and sings incessantly.
Lovely as any dream the peaceful place,
And scarcely changed since on her gentle face
For the last time on that sad April day
He gazed, and felt, for him, all beauty lay
Buried with her forever. Dull to him
Looked the bright world through eyes with tears so dim!
"I soon shall follow the same dreary way
That leads and opens to the coasts of day."
His only hope! But when slow time had dealt
Firmly with him and kindly, and he felt
The storm and stress of strong and piercing pain
Yielding at last, and he grew calm again,
Doubtless he found another mate before
He followed Mary to the happy shore!

But none the less his grief appeals to me
Who sit and listen to the singing sea
This matchless summer day, beside the stone
He made to echo with his bitter moan,
And in my eyes I feel the foolish tears
For buried sorrow, dead a hundred years!

AT THE BREAKERS' EDGE.

THROUGH the wide sky Thy north-wind's thunder roars
Resistless, till no cloud is left to flee,
And down the clear, cold heaven unhindered pours
Thine awful moonlight on the winter sea.

The vast, black, raging spaces, torn and wild,
With an insensate fury answer back
To the gale's challenge, hurrying breakers, piled
Each over each, roll through the glittering track.

I shudder in the terror of Thy cold,
As buffeted by the fierce blast I stand,
Watching that shining path of bronzéd gold,
With solemn, shadowy rocks on either hand;

While at their feet, ghastly and white as death,
The cruel, foaming billows plunge and rave.
O Father! where art Thou? My feeble breath
Cries to Thee through the storm of wind and wave.

The cry of all Thy children since the first
That walked Thy planets' myriad paths among;
The cry of all mankind whom doubt has cursed,
In every clime, in every age and tongue.

Thou art the cold, the swift fire that consumes;
Thy vast, unerring forces never fail;
And Thou art in the frailest flower that blooms,
As in the breath of this tremendous gale.

Yet, though Thy laws are clear as light, and prove
Thee changeless, ever human weakness craves
Some deeper knowledge for our human love
That looks with sad eyes o'er its wastes of graves,

And hungers for the dear hands softly drawn,
One after one, from out our longing grasp.
Dost Thou reach out for them? In the sweet dawn
Of some new world thrill they within Thy clasp?

Ah! what am I, Thine atom, standing here
In presence of Thy pitiless elements,
Daring to question Thy great silence drear,
No voice may break to lighten our suspense!

Thou only, infinite Patience, that endures
  Forever! Blind and dumb I cling to Thee.
Slow glides the bitter night, and silent pours
  Thine awful moonlight on the winter sea.

"FOR THOUGHTS."

A PANSY on his breast she laid,
Splendid, and dark with Tyrian dyes;
"Take it, 'tis like your tender eyes,
Deep as the midnight heaven," she said.

The rich rose mantling in her cheek,
Before him like the dawn she stood,
Pausing upon Life's height, subdued,
Yet triumphing, both proud and meek.

And white as winter stars, intense
With steadfast fire, his brilliant face
Bent toward her with an eager grace,
Pale with a rapture half suspense.

"You give me then a thought, O Sweet!"
He cried, and kissed the purple flower,
And bowed by Love's resistless power,
Trembling he sank before her feet.

She crowned his beautiful bowed head
With one caress of her white hand;
"Rise up, my flower of all the land,
For all my thoughts are yours," she said.

WHEREFORE?

Black sea, black sky! A ponderous steamship driving
Between them, laboring westward on her way,
And in her path a trap of Death's contriving
Waiting remorseless for its easy prey.

Hundreds of souls within her frame lie dreaming,
Hoping and fearing, longing for the light:
With human life and thought and feeling teeming,
She struggles onward through the starless night.

Upon her furnace fires fresh fuel flinging,
The swarthy firemen grumble at the dust
Mixed with the coal — when suddenly upspringing,
Swift through the smoke-stack like a signal thrust,

Flares a red flame, a dread illumination!
A cry, — a tumult! Slowly to her helm
The vessel yields, 'mid shouts of acclamation,
And joy and terror all her crew o'erwhelm;

For looming from the blackness drear before them
Discovered is the iceberg — hardly seen,
Its ghastly precipices hanging o'er them,
Its reddened peaks, with dreadful chasms between,

Ere darkness swallows it again! and veering
Out of its track the brave ship onward steers,
Just grazing ruin. Trembling still, and fearing,
Her grateful people melt in prayers and tears.

Is it a mockery, their profound thanksgiving?
Another ship goes shuddering to her doom
Unwarned, that very night, with hopes as living,
With freight as precious, lost amid the gloom,

With not a ray to show the apparition
Waiting to slay her, none to cry "Beware!"
Rushing straight onward headlong to perdition,
And for her crew no time vouchsafed for prayer!

Could they have stormed Heaven's gate with anguished praying,
It would not have availed a feather's weight
Against their doom. Yet were they disobeying
No law of God, to beckon such a fate.

And do not tell me the Almighty Master
  Would work a miracle to save the one,
And yield the other up to dire disaster,
  By merely human justice thus outdone!

Vainly we weep and wrestle with our sorrow —
  We cannot see His roads, they lie so broad:
But His eternal day knows no to-morrow,
  And life and death are all the same with God

13392

GUENDOLEN.

She is so fair, I thought, so dear and fair!
Maidenly beautiful from head to feet,
With pensive profile delicate and sweet,
And Titian's color in her sunny hair.

So fair, I thought, rejoicing even to note
The little flexible, transparent wrist,
The purple of the gold-clasped amethyst
That glittered at her white and slender throat:

The tiny ear, curled like a rosy shell;
The gentle splendor of the wide brown eyes,
Deep, lustrous, tender, clear as morning skies
The full, sad lips, — the voice that like a bell

Rang thrilling with a music sweet and wild,
High, airy-pure as fluting of the fays,
Or bird-notes in the early summer days,
And joyous as the laughter of a child.

Dearest, has Heaven aught to give thee more?
I thought, the while I watched her changing face, —
Heard her fine tones, and marked her gestures' grace, —
Yea, one more gift is left, all gifts before.

We go our separate ways on earth, and pain,
God's shaping chisel, waits us as the rest,
With nobler charm thy beauty to invest,
And make thee lovelier ere we meet again.

THE WATCH OF BOON ISLAND.

They crossed the lonely and lamenting sea;
Its moaning seemed but singing. "Wilt thou dare,"
He asked her, "brave the loneliness with me?"
"What loneliness," she said, "if thou art there?"

Afar and cold on the horizon's rim
Loomed the tall light-house, like a ghostly sign;
They sighed not as the shore behind grew dim,
A rose of joy they bore across the brine.

They gained the barren rock, and made their home
Among the wild waves and the sea-birds wild;
The wintry winds blew fierce across the foam,
But in each other's eyes they looked and smiled.

Aloft the light-house sent its warnings wide,
Fed by their faithful hands, and ships in sight
With joy beheld it, and on land men cried,
"Look, clear and steady burns Boon Island light!"

And, while they trimmed the lamp with busy hands,
" Shine far and through the dark, sweet light,"
they cried;
" Bring safely back the sailors from all lands
To waiting love, — wife, mother, sister, bride!"

No tempest shook their calm, though many a storm
Tore the vexed ocean into furious spray;
No chill could find them in their Eden warm,
And gently Time lapsed onward day by day.

Said I no chill could find them? There is one
Whose awful footfalls everywhere are known,
With echoing sobs, who chills the summer sun,
And turns the happy heart of youth to stone;

Inexorable Death, a silent guest
At every hearth, before whose footsteps flee
All joys, who rules the earth, and, without rest,
Roams the vast shuddering spaces of the sea;

Death found them; turned his face and passed
her by,
But laid a finger on her lover's lips,
And there was silence. Then the storm ran high,
And tossed and troubled sore the distant ships.

Nay, who shall speak the terrors of the night,
The speechless sorrow, the supreme despair?
Still like a ghost she trimmed the waning light,
Dragging her slow weight up the winding stair.

With more than oil the saving lamp she fed,
While lashed to madness the wild sea she heard;
She kept her awful vigil with the dead,
And God's sweet pity still she ministered.

O sailors, hailing loud the cheerful beam,
Piercing so far the tumult of the dark,
A radiant star of hope, you could not dream
What misery there sat cherishing that spark!

Three times the night, too terrible to bear,
Descended, shrouded in the storm. At last
The sun rose clear and still on her despair,
And all her striving to the winds she cast,

And bowed her head and let the light die out,
For the wide sea lay calm as her dead love.
When evening fell, from the far land, in doubt,
Vainly to find that faithful star men strove.

Sailors and landsmen look, and women's eyes,
For pity ready, search in vain the night,
And wondering neighbor unto neighbor cries,
"Now what, think you, can ail Boon Island light?"

Out from the coast toward her high tower they sailed;
They found her watching, silent, by her dead,
A shadowy woman, who nor wept, nor wailed,
But answered what they spake, till all was said.

They bore the dead and living both away.
With anguish time seemed powerless to destroy
She turned, and backward gazed across the bay, —
Lost in the sad sea lay her rose of joy.

BEETHOVEN.

I.

O SOVEREIGN Master! stern and splendid power,
That calmly dost both Time and Death defy;
Lofty and lone as mountain peaks that tower,
Leading our thoughts up to the eternal sky:
Keeper of some divine, mysterious key,
Raising us far above all human care,
Unlocking awful gates of harmony
To let heaven's light in on the world's despair;
Smiter of solemn chords that still command
Echoes in souls that suffer and aspire,
In the great moment while we hold thy hand,
Baptized with pain and rapture, tears and fire,
God lifts our saddened foreheads from the dust,
The everlasting God, in whom we trust!

II.

O stateliest! who shall speak thy praise, who find
A fitting word to utter before thee?
Thou lonely splendor, thou consummate mind,
Who marshalest thy hosts in majesty;

Thy shadowy armies of resistless thought,
  Thy subtile forces drawn from Nature's heart,
Thy solemn breathing, mighty music, wrought
  Of life and death — a miracle thou art!
The restless tides of human life that swing
  In stormy currents, thou dost touch and sway;
Deep tones within us answer, shuddering,
  At thy resounding voice — we cast away
All our unworthiness, made strong by thee,
Thou great uplifter of humanity!

III.

And was it thus the master looked, think you?
  Is this the painter's fancy? Who can tell!
These strong and noble outlines should be true:
  On the broad brow such majesty should dwell.
Yea, and these deep, indomitable eyes
  Are surely his. Lo, the imperial will
In every feature! Mighty purpose lies
  About the shut mouth, resolute and still.
Observe the head's pathetic attitude,
  Bent forward, listening, — he that might not hear!
Ah, could the world's adoring gratitude,
  So late to come, have made his life less drear!
Hearest thou, now, great soul beyond our ken,
Men's reverent voices answering thee, "Amen?"

MOZART.

Most beautiful among the helpers thou!
All heaven's fresh air and sunshine at thy voice
Flood with refreshment many a weary brow,
And sad souls thrill with courage and rejoice
To hear God's gospel of pure gladness sound
So sure and clear in this bewildered world,
Till the sick vapors that our sense confound,
By cheerful winds are into nothing whirled.
O matchless melody! O perfect art!
O lovely, lofty voice, unfaltering!
O strong and radiant and divine Mozart,
Among earth's benefactors crowned a king!
Loved shalt thou be while time may yet endure,
Spirit of health, sweet, sound, and wise, and pure!

SCHUBERT.

At the open window I lean;
Flowers in the garden without
Faint in the heat and the drought;
What does the music mean?

For here, from the cold keys within,
Is a tempest of melody drawn;
Doubts, passionate questions, the dawn
Of high hope, and a triumph to win;

While out in the garden, blood-red
The poppy droops, faint in the heat
Of the noon, and the sea-wind so sweet
Caresses its delicate head.

And still the strong music goes on
With its storming of beautiful heights,
With its sorrow that heaven requites,
And the victory fought for is won!

High with thy gift didst thou reach,
Schubert, whose genius superb
Nothing could check or could curb:
Thou liftest the heart with thy speech!

CHOPIN.

CALM is the close of the day,
All things are quiet and blest;
Low in the darkening west
The young moon sinks slowly away.

Without, in the twilight, I dream:
Within it is cheerful and bright
With faces that bloom in the light,
And the cold keys that silently gleam.

Then a magical touch draws near,
And a voice like a call of delight
Cleaves the calm of the beautiful night,
And I turn from my musing to hear.

Lo! the movement too wondrous to name!
Agitation and rapture, the press
As of myriad waves that caress,
And break into vanishing flame.

Ah! but the exquisite strain,
  Sinking to pathos so sweet!
  Is life then a lie and a cheat?
Hark to the hopeless refrain!

Comes a shock like the voice of a soul
  Lost to good, to all beauty and joy,
  Led alone by the powers that destroy,
And fighting with fiends for control.

Drops a chord like the grave's first clod.
  Then again toss the waves of caprice,
  Wild, delicate, sweet, with no peace,
No health, and no yielding to God.

O Siren, that charmest the air
  With this potent and passionate spell,
  Sad as songs of the angels that fell,
Thou leadest alone to despair!

What troubles the night? It grows chill —
  Let the weird, wild music be;
  Fronts us the infinite sea
And Nature is holy and still.

THE PIMPERNEL.

SHE walks beside the silent shore,
The tide is high, the breeze is still ;
No ripple breaks the ocean floor,
The sunshine sleeps upon the hill.

The turf is warm beneath her feet,
Bordering the beach of stone and shell,
And thick about her path the sweet
Red blossoms of the pimpernel.

"O, sleep not yet, my flower!" she cries,
"Nor prophesy of storm to come ;
Tell me that under steadfast skies
Fair winds shall bring my lover home."

She stoops to gather flower and shell,
She sits, and smiling, studies each ;
She hears the full tide rise and swell,
And whisper softly on the beach.

Bright blossoms wet with showery tears
On her shut eyes their droplets shed.
Only the wakened waves she hears
That singing drown his rapid tread.

"Sweet, I am here!" Joy's gates swing wide,
And heaven is theirs, and all is well,
And left beside the ebbing tide
Forgotten is the pimpernel.

BY THE DEAD.

O Poverty! till now I never knew
The meaning of the word! What lack is here!
O pale mask of a soul, great, good and true!
O mocking semblance stretched upon a bier!

Each atom of this devastated face
Was so instinct with power, with warmth and light;
What desert is so desolate! No grace
Is left, no gleam, no change, no day, no night.

Where is the key that locked these gates of speech,
Once beautiful, where thought stood sentinel,
Where sweetness sat, where wisdom passed, to teach
Our weakness strength, our homage to compel?

Despoiled at last, and waste and barren lies
  This once so rich domain. Where lives and moves,
In what new world, the splendor of these eyes
  That dauntless lightened like imperial Jove's?

Annihilated, do you answer me?
  Blown out and vanished like a candle flame?
Is nothing left but this pale effigy,
  This silence drear, this dread without a name?

Has it been all in vain, our love and pride,
  This yearning love that still pursues our friend
Into the awful dark, unsatisfied,
  Bereft, and wrung with pain? Is this the end?

Would God so mock us? To our human sense
  No answer reaches through the doubtful air;
Yet with a living hope, profound, intense,
  Our tortured souls rebel against despair;

As bowing to the bitter fate we go
  Drooping and dumb as if beneath a curse;
But does not pitying Heaven answer "No!"
  With all the voices of the universe?

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND.

LAZILY, through the warm gray afternoon,
We sailed toward the land;
Over the long sweep of the billows, soon,
We saw on either hand
Peninsula and cape and silver beach
Unfold before our eyes,
Light-house and roof and spire and wooded reach
Grew clear beyond surmise.
Behind us lay the islands that we loved,
Touched by a wandering gleam,
Melting in distance, where the white sails moved
Softly as in a dream.
Drifting past buoy and scarlet beacon slow,
We gained the coast at last,
And up the harbor, where no wind did blow,
We drew, and anchor cast.
The lovely land! Green, the broad fields came down
Almost into the sea;
Nestled the quiet homesteads warm and brown,
Embraced by many a tree;

The gray above was streaked with smiling blue,
  The snowy gulls sailed o'er;
The shining golden-rod waved, where it grew,
  A welcome to the shore.
Peaceful the whole, and sweet. Beyond the sand,
  The dwelling-place I sought
Lay in the sunshine. All the scene I scanned
  Full of one wistful thought:
Saw any eyes our vessel near the shore
  From vine-draped windows quaint?
Waited my bright, shy darling at the door,
  Fairer than words could paint?
I did not see her gleaming golden head,
  Nor hear her clear voice call;
As up the beach I went with rapid tread,
  Lonely and still was all.
But on the smooth sand printed, far and near,
  I saw her footsteps small;
Here had she loitered, here she hastened, here
  She climbed the low stone wall.
Such pathos in those little footprints spoke,
  I paused and lingered long;
Listening as far away the billows broke
  With the old solemn song.
"The infinite hoary spray of the salt sea,"
  In yet another tide,

Should wash away these traces utterly;
And in my heart I cried;
"O thou Creator, when thy waves of Time,
The infinite hoary spray
That sweeps life from the earth at dawn and prime
Have swept her soul away,
How shall I know it is not even as these
Light footprints in the sand,
That vanish into naught? For no man sees
Clearly what thou hast planned."
And sadly musing, up the slope I pressed,
And sought her where she played,
By breeze and sunshine flattered and caressed,
A merry little maid.
And while I clasped her close and held her fast,
And looked into her face,
Half shy, half smiling, wholly glad at last
To rest in my embrace,
From the clear heaven of her innocent eyes
Leaped Love to answer me,
Divinely through the mortal shape that dies
Shone immortality!
What the winds hinted, what the awful sky
Held in its keeping, — all
The vast sea's prophesying suddenly
Grew clear as clarion call.

The secret nature strives to speak, yet hides,
  Flashed from those human eyes
To slay my doubt: I felt that all the tides
  Of death and change might rise
And devastate the world, yet I could see
  This steady shining spark
Should live eternally, could never be
  Lost in the unfathomed dark!
And when beneath a threatening sunset sky
  We trimmed our sails and turned
Seaward again, with many a sweet good-by
  A quiet gladness burned
Within me, as I watched her tiny form
  Go dancing up and down,
Light as a sandpiper before the storm,
  Upon the beach-edge brown,
Waving her little kerchief to and fro
  Till we were out of sight,
Sped by a wild wind that began to blow
  Out of the troubled night:
And while we tossed upon an angry sea,
  And round the lightning ran,
And muttering thunder rolled incessantly
  As the black storm began,
I knew the fair and peaceful landscape lay
  Safe hidden in the gloom,

Waiting the glad returning of the day
To smile again and bloom:
And sure as that to-morrow's sun would rise,
And day again would be,
Shone the sweet promise of those childish eyes
Wherein God answered me.

A BROKEN LILY.

O Lily, dropped upon the gray sea-sand,
What time my fair love through the morning land
Led the rejoicing children, singing all
In happy chorus, to their festival,
Under green trees the flowery fields among;
  Now, when the noon-sun blazes o'er the sea,
And echo tells not of the song they sung,
  And all thy silver splendor silently
Thou yieldest to the salt and bitter tide,
  I find thee, and, remembering on whose breast
Thy day began in thy fresh beauty's pride,
  Though of thy bloom and fragrance dispossessed,
Thou art to me than all June's flowers more sweet,
Fairer than Aphrodite's foam-kissed feet!

MAY MORNING.

WARM, wild, rainy wind, blowing fitfully,
Stirring dreamy breakers on the slumberous May sea,
What shall fail to answer thee? What thing shall withstand
The spell of thine enchantment, flowing over sea and land?

All along the swamp-edge in the rain I go,
All about my head thou the loosened locks doth blow;
Like the German goose-girl in the fairy tale,
I watch across the shining pool my flock of ducks that sail.

Redly gleam the rose-haws, dripping with the wet,
Fruit of sober autumn, glowing crimson yet;
Slender swords of iris leaves cut the water clear,
And light green creeps the tender grass, thick spreading far and near.

Every last year's stalk is set with brown or
golden studs;
All the boughs of bayberry are thick with scented
buds;
Islanded in turfy velvet, where the ferns uncurl,
Lo! the large white duck's egg glimmers like a
pearl!

Softly sing the billows, rushing, whispering low;
Freshly, oh! deliciously, the warm, wild wind
doth blow!
Plaintive bleat of new washed lambs comes faint
from far away;
And clearly cry the little birds, alert and blithe
and gay.

O happy, happy morning! O dear, familiar place!
O warm, sweet tears of Heaven, fast falling on
my face!
O well-remembered, rainy wind, blow all my
care away,
That I may be a child again this blissful morn
of May.

ALL 'S WELL.

WHAT dost thou here, young wife, by the water-side,
Gathering crimson dulse?
Know'st thou not that the cloud in the west glooms wide,
And the wind has a hurrying pulse?

Peaceful the eastern waters before thee spread,
And the cliffs rise high behind,
While thou gatherest sea-weeds, green and brown and red,
To the coming trouble blind.

She lifts her eyes to the top of the granite crags,
And the color ebbs from her cheek,
Swift vapors skurry the black squall's tattered flags,
And she hears the gray gull shriek.

And like a blow is the thought of the little boat
By this on its homeward way,

But her heart cries low, as writhing it lies on the rack,
"Sweet, art thou fatherless?"
And swift to her mother she carries the little one back,
Where she waits in her sore distress.

Then into the heart of the storm she rushes forth;
Like leaden bullets the rain
Beats hard in her face, and the hurricane from the north
Would drive her back again.

'T splits the shingles off the roof like a wedge,
It lashes her clothes and her hair,
But slowly she fights her way to the western ledge,
With the strength of her despair.

Through the flying spray, through the rain-cloud's shattered stream,
What shapes in the distance grope,
Like figures that haunt the shore of a dreadful dream?
She is wild with a desperate hope.

Have pity, merciful Heaven! Can it be?
Is it no vision that mocks?

From billow to billow the headlong plunging sea
Has tossed them high on the rocks;

And the hollow skiff like a child's toy lies on the ledge
This side of the roaring foam,
And up from the valley of death, from the grave's drear edge,
Like ghosts of men they come!

O sweetly, sweetly shines the sinking sun
And the storm is swept away,
Piled high in the east are the cloud-heaps purple and dun,
And peacefully dies the day.

But a sweeter peace falls soft on the grateful souls
In the lonely isle that dwell,
And the whisper and rush of every wave that rolls
Seem murmuring, "All is well."

THE SECRET.

"O WHAT saw you, gathering flowers so early this
May morn?"
"I saw a shining blackbird loud whistling on a
thorn;
I saw the mottled plover from the swamp-edge fly
away;
I heard the blithe song-sparrows who welcomed
the bright day;
I heard the curlew calling, O sweet, so sweet and
far!
I saw the white gull twinkling in the blue sky like
a star."

"And is the blackbird whistling yet, and does the
curlew call,
And should I find your rapture if I saw and heard
it all?
Life seems to me so hard to bear, perplexed with
change and loss,
Heavy with pain, and weary still with care's per
petual cross,

Why should the white gull's twinkling wings, half lost amid the blue,
Bring any joy? Yet care and pain weigh just as much on you,
And you come back and look at me with such joy-beaming eyes
An angel might have been your guide through fields of Paradise!
What is the secret Nature keeps to whisper in your ear
That sends the swift blood pulsing warm with such immortal cheer,
And makes your eyes shine like the morn, and rings sweet in your voice,
Like some clear, distant trumpet sound that bids the world rejoice?"
"Her secret? Nay, she speaks to me no word you might not hear.
Her voice is ever ready and her meaning ever clear:
But I love her with such passion that her lightest gesture seems
Divinely beautiful — she fills my life with golden dreams.
I tremble in her presence, to her every touch and tone;

I answer to her whisper — love has to worship grown.
She turns her solemn face to me, and lays within my hand
The key that puts her endless wealth for aye at my command;
And so, because I worship her, her benedictions rest
Upon me, and she folds me safe and warm upon her breast,
And in her sweet and awful eyes I gaze till I forget
The troubles that perplex our days, the tumult and the fret.
O, would you learn the word of power that lifts, all care above,
The sad soul up to Nature's heart? I answer, It is Love!"

SEASIDE GOLDEN-ROD.

GRACEFUL, tossing plume of glowing gold,
  Waving lonely on the rocky ledge;
Leaning seaward, lovely to behold,
  Clinging to the high cliff's ragged edge;

Burning in the pure September sky,
  Spike of gold against the stainless blue,
Do you watch the vessels drifting by?
  Does the quiet day seem long to you?

Up to you I climb, O perfect shape!
  Poised so lightly 'twixt the sky and sea;
Looking out o'er headland, crag, and cape,
  O'er the ocean's vague immensity.

Up to you my human thought I bring,
  Sit me down your peaceful watch to share.
Do you hear the waves below us sing?
  Feel you the soft fanning of the air?

How much of life's rapture is your right?
In earth's joy what may your portion be?
Rocked by breezes, touched by tender light,
Fed by dews and sung to by the sea!

Something of delight and of content
Must be yours, however vaguely known;
And your grace is mutely eloquent,
And your beauty makes the rock a throne.

Matters not to you, O golden flower!
That such eyes of worship watch you sway
But you make more sweet the dreamful hour,
And you crown for me the tranquil day.

MARCH.

THE keen north wind pipes loud;
Swift scuds the flying cloud;
Light lies the new fallen snow;
The ice-clad eaves drip slow,
For glad Spring has begun,
And to the ardent sun
The earth, long time so bleak,
Turns a frost-bitten cheek.
Through the clear sky of March,
Blue to the topmost arch,
Swept by the New Year's gales,
The crow, harsh-clamoring, sails.
By the swift river's flood
The willow's golden blood
Mounts to the highest spray,
More vivid day by day;
And fast the maples now
Crimson through every bough,
And from the alder's crown
Swing the long catkins brown.

Gone is the Winter's pain
Though sorrow still remain,
Though eyes with tears be wet,
The voice of our regret
We hush, to hear the sweet
Far fall of summer's feet.
The Heavenly Father wise
Looks in the saddened eyes
Of our unworthiness,
Yet doth He cheer and bless.
Doubt and Despair are dead;
Hope dares to raise her head,
And whispers of delight
Fill the earth day and night.
The snow-drops by the door
Lift upward, sweet and pure,
Their delicate bells; and soon,
In the calm blaze of noon,
By lowly window-sills
Will laugh the daffodils!

SONG.

THE clover blossoms kiss her feet,
She is so sweet,
While I, who may not kiss her hand,
Bless all the wild flowers in the land.

Soft sunshine falls across her breast,
She is so blest.
I'm jealous of its arms of gold,
O that these arms her form might fold!

Gently the breezes kiss her hair,
She is so fair!
Let flowers and sun and breeze go by
O dearest! Love me or I die.

OSCAR LAIGHTON.

THE WHITE ROVER.

THEY called the little schooner the "White Rover,"
When they lightly launched her on the brimming tide;
Staunch and trim she was to sail the broad seas over,
And with cheers they spread her snowy canvas wide;

And a thing of beauty, forth she fared to wrestle
With the wild, uncertain ocean, far and near,
And no evil thing befell the graceful vessel,
And she sailed in storm and sunshine many a year.

But at last a rumor grew that she was haunted,
That up her slender masts her sails had flown
Unhelped by human hands, as if enchanted,
As she rocked upon her moorings all alone.

Howe'er that be — one day in winter weather,
When the bitter north was raging at its worst,
And wind and cold vexed the roused sea together,
Till Dante's frozen hell seemed less accurst,

Two fishermen, to draw their trawls essaying,
Seized by the hurricane that ploughed the bay,
Were swept across the waste; and hardly weighing
Death's chance, the Rover reefed and bore away

To save them, — reached them, shuddering where they waited
Their quick destruction, tossing white and dumb,
And caught them from perdition; then, belated,
Strove to return the rough way she had come.

But there was no returning! Fierce as lightning
The eager cold grew keener, more intense.
Across her homeward track the billows, whitening,
In crested mountains rolling, drove her thence;

Till her brave crew, benumbed, gave up the battle,
Clad in a mail of ice that weighed like lead;
They heard the crusted blocks and rigging rattle,
They saw the sails like sheets of iron spread

And powerless before the gale they drifted,
Till swiftly dropped the black and hopeless night.
The wild tornado never lulled nor shifted,
But drove them toward the coast upon their right,

And flung the frozen schooner, all sail standing,
Stiff as an iceberg on the icy shore;
And half alive, her torpid people, landing,
Crept to the light-house, and were safe once more.

Then what befell the vessel, standing solemn
Through that tremendous night of cold and storm,
Upon the frost-locked land, a frigid column,
Beneath the stars, a silent, glittering form?

None ever saw her more! The tide upbore her,
Released her fastened keel, and ere the day,
Without a guide, and all the world before her,
The sad, forsaken Rover sailed away.

But sometimes, when in summer twilight blending,
Sunset and moonrise mingle their rich light,
Or when on noonday mists the sun is spending
His glory, till they glimmer thin and white,

Upon the dim horizon melting, gleaming,
Slender, ethereal, like a lovely ghost
Soft looming, in the hazy distance dreaming,
Or gliding like a film along the coast,

I seem to see her yet: and skippers hoary,
Sailors and fishermen, will still relate
Among their sea-worn mates the simple story
Of how the wandering Rover met her fate;

And shake their heads: "Perhaps the tempest wrecked her,
But snug and trim and tidy, fore and aft,
I've seen the vessel since, or else her spectre,
Sailing as never yet sailed earthly craft,

Straight in the wind's teeth; and with steady motion
Cleaving a calm as if it blew a gale!"
And they are sure her wraith still haunts the ocean,
Mocking the sight with semblance of a sail.

POEMS FOR CHILDREN.

INHOSPITALITY.

Down on the north wind sweeping
  Comes the storm with roaring din;
Sadly, with dreary tumult,
  The twilight gathers in.

The snow-covered little island
  Is white as a frosted cake;
And round and round it the billows
  Bellow, and thunder, and break.

Within doors the blazing drift-wood
  Is glowing, ruddy and warm,
And happiness sits at the fire-side,
  Watching the raging storm.

What fluttered past the window,
  All weary and wet and weak,
With the heavily drooping pinions,
  And the wicked, crooked beak?

Where the boats before the house-door
Are drawn up from the tide,
On the tallest prow he settles,
And furls his wings so wide.

Uprises the elder brother,
Uprises the sister too;
"Nay, brother, he comes for shelter!
Spare him! What would you do?"

He laughs and is gone for his rifle,
And steadily takes his aim:
But the wild wind seizes his yellow beard,
And blows it about like flame.

Into his eyes the snow sifts,
Till he cannot see aright:
Ah, the cruel gun is baffled!
And the weary hawk takes flight;

And slowly up he circles,
Higher and higher still;
The fierce wind catches and bears him away
O'er the bleak crest of the hill.

Cries the little sister, watching,
"Whither now can he flee?
Black through the whirling snow-flakes
Glooms the awful face of the sea,

"And tossed and torn by the tempest,
He must sink in the bitter brine!
Why couldn't we pity and save him
Till the sun again should shine?"

They drew her back to the fireside
And laughed at her cloudy eyes, —
"What, mourn for that robber-fellow,
The cruellest bird that flies!

"Your song-sparrow hardly would thank you,
And which is the dearest, pray?"
But she heard at the doors and windows
The lashing of the spray;

And as ever the shock of the breakers
The heart of their quiet stirred,
She thought, "O would we had sheltered him,
The poor, unhappy bird!"

THE GREAT WHITE OWL.

He sat aloft on the rocky height,
  Snow-white above the snow,
In the winter morning calm and bright,
  And I gazed at him, below.

He faced the east, where the sunshine streamed
  On the singing, sparkling sea,
And he blinked with his yellow eyes, that seemed
  All sightless and blank to be.

The snow-birds swept in a whirling crowd
  About him gleefully,
And piped and whistled sweet and loud,
  But never a plume stirred he.

Singing they passed and away they flew
  Through the brilliant atmosphere;
Cloud-like he sat, with the living blue
  Of the sky behind him, clear.

'Give you good-morrow, friend," I cried.
He wheeled his large round head,
Solemn and stately, from side to side,
But never a word he said.

'O lonely creature, weird and white,
Why are you sitting there,
Like a glimmering ghost from the still midnight,
In the beautiful morning air?"

He spurned the rock with his talons strong,
No human speech brooked he;
Like a snow-flake huge he sped along
Swiftly and noiselessly.

His wide, slow-waving wings so white,
Heavy and soft did seem;
Yet rapid as a dream his flight,
And silent as a dream.

And when a distant crag he gained,
Bright-twinkling like a star,
He shook his shining plumes, and deigned
To watch me from afar.

And once again, when the evening-red
Burned dimly in the west,
I saw him motionless, his head
Bent forward on his breast.

Dark and still, 'gainst the sunset sky
Stood out his figure lone;
Crowning the bleak rock far and high,
By sad winds overblown.

Did he dream of the ice-fields, stark and drear?
Of his haunts on the Arctic shore?
Or the downy brood in his nest last year
On the coast of Labrador?

Had he fluttered the Esquimaux huts among?
How I wished he could speak to me!
Had he sailed on the icebergs, rainbow-hung,
In the open Polar Sea?

O many a tale he might have told
Of marvelous sounds and sights,
Where the world lies hopeless and dumb with cold,
Through desolate days and nights.

But with folded wings, while the darkness fell,
He sat, nor spake, nor stirred ;
And charmed as if by a subtile spell,
I mused on the wondrous Bird.

YELLOW-BIRD.

YELLOW-BIRD, where did you learn that song,
  Perched on the trellis where grape-vines clamber,
In and out fluttering, all day long,
  With your golden breast bedropped with amber?

Where do you hide such a store of delight,
  O delicate creature, tiny and slender,
Like a mellow morning sunbeam bright
  And overflowing with music tender!

You never learned it at all, the song
  Springs from your heart in rich completeness,
Beautiful, blissful, clear and strong,
  Steeped in the summer's ripest sweetness.

To think we are neighbors of yours! How fine
  O what a pleasure to watch you together,
Bringing your fern-down and floss to re-line
  The nest worn thin by the winter weather!

Send up your full notes like worshipful prayers;
  Yellow-bird, sing while the summer 's before you;
Little you dream that, in spite of their cares,
  Here 's a whole family, proud to adore you!

SPRING.

THE alder by the river
  Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
  For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over,
  And O, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
  That once again 'tis spring,

The gay green grass comes creeping
  So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
  A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
  And scarlet columbine,
And in the sunny meadows
  The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
There peeps the violet blue;
O happy little children!
God made them all for you.

THE BURGOMASTER GULL.

THE old-wives sit on the heaving brine,
White-breasted in the sun,
Preening and smoothing their feathers fine,
And scolding, every one.

The snowy kittiwakes overhead,
With beautiful beaks of gold,
And wings of delicate gray outspread,
Float, listening while they scold.

And a foolish guillemot, swimming by,
Though heavy and clumsy and dull,
Joins in with a will when he hears their cry
'Gainst the Burgomaster Gull.

For every sea-bird, far and near,
With an atom of brains in its skull,
Knows plenty of reasons for hate and fear
Of the Burgomaster Gull.

The black ducks gather, with plumes so rich,
And the coots in twinkling lines;
And the swift and slender water-witch,
Whose neck like silver shines;

Big eider-ducks, with their caps pale green
And their salmon-colored vests;
And gay mergansers sailing between,
With their long and glittering crests.

But the loon aloof on the outer edge
Of the noisy meeting keeps,
And laughs to watch them behind the ledge
Where the lazy breaker sweeps.

They scream and wheel, and dive and fret,
And flutter in the foam;
And fish and mussels blue they get
To feed their young at home:

Till hurrying in, the little auk
Brings tidings that benumbs,
And stops at once their clamorous talk, —
"The Burgomaster comes!"

And up he sails, a splendid sight!
With "wings like banners" wide,
And eager eyes both big and bright,
That peer on every side.

A lovely kittiwake flying past
With a slippery pollock fine, —
Quoth the Burgomaster, "Not so fast,
My beauty! This is mine!"

His strong wing strikes with a dizzying shock;
Poor kittiwake, shrieking, flees;
His booty he takes to the nearest rock,
To eat it at his ease.

The scared birds scatter to left and right,
But the bold buccaneer, in his glee,
Cares little enough for their woe and their fright, —
"'Twill be *your* turn next!" cries he.

He sees not, hidden behind the rock,
In the sea-weed, a small boat's hull,
Nor dreams he the gunners have spared the flock
For the Burgomaster Gull.

So proudly his dusky wings are spread,
And he launches out on the breeze, —
When lo! what thunder of wrath and dread!
What deadly pangs are these!

The red blood drips and the feathers fly,
Down drop the pinions wide;
The robber-chief, with a bitter cry,
Falls headlong in the tide!

They bear him off with laugh and shout;
The wary birds return, —
From the clove-brown feathers that float about
The glorious news they learn.

Then such a tumult fills the place
As never was sung or said;
And all cry, wild with joy, "The base,
Bad Burgomaster's dead!"

And the old-wives sit with their caps so white,
And their pretty beaks so red,
And swing on the billows, and scream with delight.
For the Burgomaster's dead!

MILKING.

Little dun cow to the apple tree tied,
Chewing the cud of reflection,
I that am milking you, sit by your side,
Lost in a sad retrospection.

Far o'er the field the tall daisies blush warm,
For rosy the sunset is dying;
Across the still valley, o'er meadow and farm,
The flush of its beauty is lying.

White foams the milk in the pail at my feet,
Clearly the robins are calling;
Soft blows the evening wind after the heat,
Cool the long shadows are falling.

Little dun cow, 'tis so tranquil and sweet!
Are you light-hearted, I wonder?
What do *you* think about, — something to eat?
On clover and grass do you ponder?

I am remembering days that are dead,
And a brown little maid in the gloaming,
Milking her cow, with the west burning red
Over waves that about her were foaming.

Up from the sad east the deep shadows gloomed
Out of the distance and found her;
Lightly she sang while the solemn sea boomed
Like a great organ around her.

Under the light-house no sweet-brier grew,
Dry was the grass, and no daisies
Waved in the wind, and the flowers were few
That lifted their delicate faces.

But O, she was happy, and careless, and blest,
Full of the song-sparrow's spirit;
Grateful for life, for the least and the best
Of the blessings that mortals inherit.

Fairer than gardens of Paradise seemed
The desolate spaces of water;
Nature was hers, — clouds that frowned — stars that gleamed, —
What beautiful lessons they taught her!

Would I could find you again, little maid,
  Striving with utmost endeavor, —
Could find in my breast that light heart, unafraid,
  That has vanished for ever and ever!

JACK FROST.

RUSTILY creak the crickets: Jack Frost came down last night,
He slid to the earth on a starbeam, keen and sparkling and bright;
He sought in the grass for the crickets with delicate icy spear,
So sharp and fine and fatal, and he stabbed them far and near.
Only a few stout fellows, thawed by the morning sun,
Chirrup a mournful echo of by gone frolic and fun.
But yesterday such a rippling chorus ran all over the land,
Over the hills and the valleys, down to the gray sea-sand.
Millions of merry harlequins, skipping and dancing in glee,
Cricket and locust and grasshopper, happy as happy could be:
Scooping rich caves in ripe apples, and feeding on honey and spice,

Drunk with the mellow sunshine, nor dreaming
of spears of ice!
Was it not enough that the crickets your weapon
of power should pierce?
Pray what have you done to the flowers? Jack
Frost, you are cruel and fierce.
With never a sign or a whisper, you kissed them,
and lo, they exhale
Their beautiful lives; they are drooping, their sweet
color ebbs, they are pale,
They fade and they die! See the pansies, yet
striving so hard to unfold
Their garments of velvety splendor, all Tyrian
purple and gold.
But how weary they look, and how withered, like
handsome court dames, who all night
Have danced at the ball till the sunrise struck
chill to their hearts with its light.
Where hides the wood-aster? She vanished as
snow-wreaths dissolve in the sun
The moment you touched her. Look yonder,
where sober and gray as a nun
The maple-tree stands that at sunset was blush-
ing as red as the sky;
At its foot, glowing scarlet as fire, its robes of
magnificence lie.

Despoiler! stripping the world as you strip the
shivering tree
Of color and sound and perfume, scaring the bird
and the bee,
Turning beauty to ashes — O to join the swift
swallows and fly
Far away out of sight of your mischief! I give
you no welcome, not I!

THE BIRDS' ORCHESTRA.

Bobolink shall play the violin,
Great applause to win;
Lonely, sweet, and sad, the meadow lark
Plays the oboe. Hark!
That inspired bugle with a soul —
'Tis the oriole;
Yellow-bird the clarionet shall play,
Blithe, and clear, and gay.
Purple finch what instrument will suit?
He can play the flute.
Fire-winged blackbirds sound the merry fife,
Soldiers without strife;
And the robins wind the mellow horn
Loudly eve and morn.
Who shall clash the cymbals? Jay and crow;
That is all they know.
Hylas twang their harps so weird and high,
Such a tuneful cry!
And to roll the deep, melodious drum,
Lo! the bull-frogs come!
Then the splendid chorus, who shall sing
Of so fine a thing?

Who the names of the performers call
Truly, one and all?
Blue-bird, bunting, cat-bird, chickadee
(Phœbe-bird is he),
Swallow, creeper, cross-bill, cuckoo, dove,
Wee wren that I love;
Brisk fly-catcher, finches — what a crowd!
King-bird whistling loud;
Sweet rose-breasted grossbeak, vireo, thrush —
Hear these two, and hush;
Scarlet tanager, song-sparrow small
(Dearer he than all;
At the first sound of his friendly voice
Saddest hearts rejoice),
Redpoll, nuthatch, thrasher, plover gray —
Curlew did I say?
What a jangling all the grakles make!
Is it some mistake?
Anvil chorus yellow-hammers strike,
And the wicked shrike
Harshly creaks like some half-open door;
He can do no more.

THE BLIND LAMB.

'T was summer, and softly the ocean
  Sang, sparkling in light and heat,
And over the water and over the land
  The warm south wind blew sweet.

And the children played in the sunshine,
  And shouted and scampered in glee
O'er the grassy slopes, or the weed-strewn beach,
  Or rocked on the dreaming sea.

They had roamed the whole bright morning,
  The troop of merry boys,
And in they flocked at noontide,
  With a clamor of joyful noise.

And they bore among them gently
  A wee lamb, white as snow;
And, "O mamma, mamma, he's blind!
  He can't tell where to go.

"And we found him lost and lonely,
And we brought him home to you,
And we 're going to feed him and care for him!"
Cried the eager little crew.

"Look, how he falls over everything!"
And they set him on his feet,
And aimlessly he wandered,
With a low and mournful bleat.

Some sign of pity he seemed to ask,
And he strove to draw more near,
When he felt the touch of a human hand,
Or a kind voice reach his ear.

They tethered him in a grassy space
Hard by the garden gate,
And with sweet fresh milk they fed him,
And cared for him early and late.

But as the golden days went on,
Forgetful the children grew,
They wearied of tending the poor blind lamb,
No longer a plaything new.

And so each day I changed his place
  Within the garden fence,
And fed him morn and noon and eve,
  And was his Providence.

And he knew the rustle of my gown,
  And every lightest tone,
And when he heard me pass, straightway
  He followed o'er stock and stone.

One dark and balmy evening,
  When the south wind breathed of rain,
I went to lead my pet within,
  And found but a broken chain.

And a terror fell upon me,
  For round on every side
The circling sea was sending in
  The strength of the full flood-tide.

I called aloud and listened,
  I knew not where to seek;
Out of the dark the warm wet wind
  Blew soft against my cheek,

And naught was heard but the sound of waves
  Crowding against the shore.
Over the dewy grass I ran,
  And called aloud once more.

What reached me out of the distance?
  Surely, a piteous bleat!
I threw my long dress over my arm,
  And followed with flying feet.

Down to the edge of the water,
  Calling again and again,
Answered so clearly, near and more near,
  By that tremulous cry of pain!

I crept to the end of the rocky ledge,
  Black lay the water wide;
Up from among the rippling waves
  Came the shivering voice that cried.

I could not see, but I answered him;
  And, stretching a rescuing hand,
I felt in the darkness his sea-soaked wool,
  And drew him in to the land.

And the poor little creature pressed so close,
  Distracted with delight,
While I dried the brine from his dripping fleece
  With my apron soft and white.

Close in my arms I gathered him,
  More glad than tongue can tell,
And he laid on my shoulder his pretty head,
  He knew that all was well.

And I thought as I bore him swiftly back,
  Content, close folded thus,
Of the Heavenly Father compassionate,
  Whose pity shall succor us.

I thought of the arms of mercy
  That clasp the world about,
And that not one of His children
  Shall perish in dread and doubt:

For He hears the voices that cry to Him,
  And near His love shall draw:
With help and comfort He waits for us,
  The Light, and the Life, and the Law!

THE ROBIN.

In the tall elm-tree sat the Robin bright,
Through the rainy April day,
And he caroled clear with a pure delight,
In the face of the sky so gray.
And the silver rain through the blossoms dropped,
And fell on the robin's coat,
And his brave red breast, but he never stopped
Piping his cheerful note;

For O, the fields were green and glad,
And the blissful life that stirred
In the earth's wide breast, was full and warm
In the heart of the little bird.
The rain-cloud lifted, the sunset light
Streamed wide over valley and hill,
As the plains of heaven the land grew bright,
And the warm south wind was still.

Then loud and clear called the happy bird,
And rapturously he sang,
Till wood and meadow and river side
With jubilant echoes rang.

But the sun dropped down in the quiet west,
And he hushed his song at last;
All nature softly sank to rest.
And the April day had passed.

MOZART AT THE FIRESIDE.

AUTUMN nights grow chilly:
  See how faces bloom
By the cheerful fire-light,
  In the quiet room!

Mother's amber necklace,
  Father's beard of gold,
Rosy cheeks of little boys
  All glowing from the cold,

Basket heaped with barberries
  Coral red and bright,
Little Silver's shaggy fur
  All shining in the light!

Barberries bright they 're picking,
  And smile and do not speak;
Happy little youngest boy
  Kisses mother's cheek, —

First mother's and then father's,
And nestles his pretty head
In the shining fur of Silver,
While they pick the barberries red.

At the piano sitting,
One touches the beautiful keys;
Silent they sit and listen
To magical melodies.

Heavenly, tender, and hopeful,
Balm for the saddest heart,
Rises the lovely music
Of the divine Mozart!

The children hear the birds sing,
And the voices of the May;
They feel the freshness of morning,
Before the toil of the day;

But father and mother listen
To a deeper undertone,
A strong arm, full of comfort, seems
About life's trouble thrown.

O children, when your summer
  Passes, and winter is near,
When the sky is dim that was so bright,
  And the way seems long and drear,

Remember the mighty master
  Still touches the human heart,
Speaking afar from heaven,
  The wonderful Mozart!

He can bring back your childhood
  With his strains of airy grace,
Till life seems fresh and beautiful
  Again for a little space:

With voices of lofty sweetness
  He shall encourage you,
Till all good things seem possible,
  And heaven's best promise true;

Till health and strength and loveliness
  Blossom from stone and clod,
And the sad old world grows bright again
  With the cheerfulness of God.

UNDER THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

BENEATH the tall, white lighthouse strayed the children,
In the May morning sweet;
About the steep and rough gray rocks they wandered
With hesitating feet;
For scattered far and wide the birds were lying,
Quiet, and cold, and dead,
That met, while they were swiftly winging northward,
The fierce light overhead,
And as the frail moths in the summer evenings
Fly to the candle's blaze,
Rushed wildly at the splendor, finding only
Death in those blinding rays.
And here were bobolink, and wren, and sparrow,
Veery, and oriole,
And purple finch, and rosy grossbeak, swallows,
And king-birds quaint and droll;
Gay soldier blackbirds, wearing on their shoulders
Red, gold-edged epaulets,

And many a homely, brown, red-breasted robin,
Whose voice no child forgets.
And yellow-birds — what shapes of perfect beauty!
What silence after song!
And mingled with them, unfamiliar warblers
That to far woods belong.
Clothing the gray rocks with a mournful beauty
By scores the dead forms lay,
That, dashed against the tall tower's cruel windows,
Dropped like the spent sea spray.
How many an old and sun-steeped barn, far inland,
Should miss about its eaves
The twitter and the gleam of these swift swallows!
And, swinging 'mid the leaves,
The oriole's nest, all empty in the elm-tree,
Would cold and silent be,
And never more these robins make the meadows
Ring with their ecstasy.
Would not the gay swamp-border miss the blackbirds,
Whistling so loud and clear?
Would not the bobolinks' delicious music
Lose something of its cheer?
"Yet," thought the wistful children, gazing landward,

"The birds will not be missed;
Others will take their place in field and forest,
Others will keep their tryst:
And we, we only, know how death has met them;
We wonder and we mourn
That from their innocent and bright existence
Thus roughly they are torn."
And so they laid the sweet, dead shapes together,
Smoothing each ruffled wing,
Perplexed and sorrowful, and pondering deeply
The meaning of this thing.
(Too hard to fathom for the wisest nature
Crowned with the snows of age!)
And all the beauty of the fair May morning
Seemed like a blotted page.
They bore them down from the rough cliffs of granite
To where the grass grew green,
And laid them 'neath the soft turf, all together,
With many a flower between;
And, looking up with wet eyes, saw how brightly
Upon the summer sea
Lay the clear sunlight, how white sails were shining,
And small waves laughed in glee:
And somehow, comfort grew to check their grieving,

A sense of brooding care,
As if, in spite of death, a loving presence
Filled all the viewless air.
"What should we fear?" whispered the little children,
"There is no thing so small
But God will care for it in earth or heaven;
He sees the sparrows fall!"

Bright blosso
On her sh
Only the wa
That singi

"Sweet, I a
And heave
And left bes
Forgotten i

GOMATER GIL

ther, with [illegible]
twinkling [illegible]
slender water-[illegible]
silver sluices ;

ch their calm [illegible]
-colored vests ;
rs sailing between,
and glistening crests.

on the outer edge
ting keeps,
ch them behind the [illegible]
breaker sweeps.

wheel, and dive and [illegible],
e foam ;
ls blue they [illegible]
ing at home :

e little auk
at benumb,
their clamorous talk, —
er comes ! "

THE CRADLE.

THE barn was low and dim and old,
Broad on the floor the sunshine slept,
And through the windows and the doors
Swift in and out the swallows swept.

And breezes from the summer sea
Drew through, and stirred the fragrant hay
Down-dropping from the loft, wherein
A gray old idle fish-net lay

Heaped in a corner, and one loop
Hung loose the dry, sweet grass among,
And hammock-wise to all the winds
It floated to and fro, and swung.

And there one day the children brought
The pet of all the house to play;
A baby boy of three years old,
And sweeter than the dawn of day.

They laid him in the dropping loop,
And softly swung him, till at last
Over his beauty balmy Sleep
Its delicate enchantment cast.

And then they ran to call us all:
"Come, see where little Rob is! Guess!"
And brought us where the darling lay,
A heap of rosy loveliness

Curled in the net: the dim old place
He brightened; like a star he shone
Cradled in air; we stood as once
The shepherds of Judea had done.

And while adoring him we gazed,
With eyes that gathered tender dew,
Wrathful upon the gentle scene
His Celtic nurse indignant flew.

"Is this a fit place for the child!"
And out of his delicious sleep
She clutched him, muttering as she went,
Her scorn and wonder, low and deep.

His father smiled, and drew aside;
A grave, sweet look was in his face,
"For One, who in a manger lay,
It was not found too poor a place!

CHANTICLEER.

I WAKE! I feel the day is near;
I hear the red cock crowing!
He cries "'T is dawn!" How sweet and clear
His cheerful call comes to my ear,
While light is slowly growing.

The white snow gathers, flake on flake;
I hear the red cock crowing!
Is anybody else awake
To see the winter morning break,
While thick and fast 't is snowing?

I think the world is all asleep;
I hear the red cock crowing!
Out of the frosty pane I peep;
The drifts are piled so wide and deep,
And wild the wind is blowing!

Nothing I see has shape or form;
I hear the red cock crowing!

But that dear voice comes through the storm
To greet me in my nest so warm,
  As if the sky were glowing!

A happy little child, I lie
  And hear the red cock crowing.
The day is dark. I wonder why
His voice rings out so brave and high,
  With gladness overflowing.